

# 10 British Stereotypes

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A stereotype is an opinion that somebody has about a specific thing, based on over-generalisation. Some stereotypes can cause serious offense and even be seen as discrimination but some have a little bit of truth in them. Today we'll look at 10 stereotypes of the British and see whether they are true or false.

## It always rains

It's true that we have northern climates in the UK and it's not typical beach weather every single day, but it also doesn't rain every single day either. Sun does exist here in the UK and in the summer months it's very dry with temperatures reaching the mid-30s. The average rainfall in the UK is 1,154mm per year, although this is concentrated in certain areas of the country. For example, in London, the average rainfall is only 650mm, which is the same as Spain and even less than France.

## We love tea

This is a true fact without a doubt. The British consume around 60 billion cups of tea per year. Considering our population is less than 70 million, that's a lot! Tea generally replaces coffee in the UK and most people will have a few cups of tea per day. However, people don't often stop at 4pm in order to have afternoon tea. In fact, having a "proper" afternoon tea during the day is quite expensive and often a treat for many people.

## The British are polite

It's true that the majority of British people are quite polite. If somebody walks into me on the street, despite it not being my fault, I would still apologise with a simple "I'm sorry" and you'll hear this in any place in the UK. We apologise for everything, even if it isn't our fault!

## **The British have a stiff upper lip**

Generally, British people have quite cold personalities and it can take a while before you earn their trust. We don't show our emotions openly. Of course, plenty of Brits do have warm personalities, but we prefer to keep our distance and not let people in until a short while after.

## **We drink a lot of alcohol**

Pubs are a very important part of British culture and you don't normally need to walk very far to find one (even in hamlets or villages). On average, a British person drinks 9.5 litres of alcohol per year, but according to the WHO, we are 25th when ranking the countries with the most alcohol consumption per year.

## **We talk about the weather a lot**

It's possible to have an entire 20-minute conversation with a Brit just talking about the weather. This topic is the perfect small talk- it's easy to talk about, it's politically neutral and a very broad conversation that can lead to further topics. If you ever have an awkward silence in conversation, then ask "what's the weather been like for you?" or "it's been lovely/bad weather recently, hasn't it?"

## **We all speak like the queen**

The UK has a vast variety of accents. Each country in the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and even each individual region has its own accent. The Queen speaks Upper Received Pronunciation (URP), which is actually only spoken by about 2% of the British population. This accent is not found in one particular region but around the country.

## **We all use British humour**

British humour is the use of unobvious sarcasm. The British, myself included, are very good at using this and it can be difficult to understand when a native speaker is using "British humour". This is one of the most difficult things to understand when moving to the UK or conversing with native British English speakers.

## **We love to queue**

We love to queue for anything and everything. The British have a very certain code of conduct when it comes to queuing and you can NEVER jump the queue. So if you are visiting the UK, expect to queue for everything – tourist attractions, public transport, even entry to a busy restaurant.

## **British food is terrible**

There is not much food that is “British” as the most popular food eaten by Brits is often Indian, Italian and American cuisine. But when you find real traditional British food, it’s pretty tasty (although not very healthy). Think of a full English breakfast, Sunday roast, fish and chips or shepherd’s pie.

In my opinion, stereotypes originate from the truth or a majority of people having experienced something, but, of course, stereotypes are an over-generalisation and not all of them are true, or only have some truth in them.