

WALES

Continent: Europe

Population: 3.27 million

[Life Expectancy \(at Birth\)](#): 81.8 (UK)

[Governance System](#): Sub-national principality with [devolved parliamentary legislature](#)

within the [parliamentary constitutional monarchy](#)

of the [United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland](#)

Capital: Cardiff (362,400)

Area: 20,779 km²

Major Languages: [Welsh](#) (Cymraeg); English

[GDP \(2021\)](#): £75.7 billion

Select Global Rankings (*UK Scores)

[Human Development Index](#): 18*

[Fragile States Index \(Inverted\)](#): 30*

[Soft Power 30 rank](#): 2*

[Human Freedom Index](#): 14*

[World Happiness Ranking](#): 17*

[Good Country Index](#): 14*

Elite Sport System Rankings

[Global Cup Ranking](#): 7*

[Per Capita Cup Ranking](#): 26*

[Olympic Medals – Summer '20](#): 64* (2nd)

[Olympic Medals – Winter '22](#): 2* (20th)

Football/World Cup Profile

[FIFA Region](#): UEFA

[FIFA Ranking](#): 17

World Cup Appearances: 2

Best World Cup Performance(s): Quarter Finals (1958)

Qualification: UEFA Playoff

[World Cup Group](#): B

Last World Cup Appearance: 1958

Wales in INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (by Alun Hardman)

Wales is a part of the United Kingdom and together with the other Celtic nations of Scotland, and Northern Ireland make up the northern, western and more mountainous parts of the British Isles. Welsh national identity emerged as a result of the Roman withdrawal in the 5th Century AD and was consolidated during the subsequent Anglo-Saxon invaders and settlers from the east in what is now England during the next five hundred years. The arrival of the Normans from France in 1066 accelerated the conquest of Wales, with Edward I finally defeating Welsh resistance in 1283. English control, the adoption of English Law, and language then followed and it was not until the late 19th and early 20th Century that a distinctive Welsh politics, and with it a revival of its cultural and linguistic heritage emerged. Much of Wales' modern national identity is a mix of its ancient Celtic past and its post-industrial present. Language, song, literature, and religion run alongside a distinctive politics that reflects Wales part in the industrial revolution. Peak coal production came in 1913 from the South Wales valleys coalfield, the largest in the UK, and stand alongside the iron and steel mills in the industrial ports of Newport, Cardiff & Swansea and the slate quarries of the North as the most important forces that have shaped modern Wales.

The Welsh people voted narrowly in favour of degree of self-government and law-making powers in 1997. This event secured Wales' status as a distinctive nation within the UK, safeguarding its distinct identity and potential for greater self-determination. Wales is not England!!! On the global stage however, it is largely unknown, but having sporting sovereignty in football and a range of other sports such as rugby and hockey mean that in sport it has equal status as any nation. The Wales Football Association are engaged in the possibility of renaming the national team Cymru and are active in drawing attention to the importance of the Welsh language and culture as a historical source of resistance to Anglicisation as a marker and a maker of the team's recent international success. Participation in Qatar is potentially Wales' ultimate achievement in Soft Power. In that regard, Wales' First Minister (President), Mark Drakeford, in attending the tournament in Qatar with a Welsh Government delegation is breaking with his Westminster Labour Party colleagues who have turned down invitations from the Qatari government because of the country's human rights record. The Welsh Government, with an Office in Qatar have significant economic ties to the Gulf State, and signed a two-year subsidised deal with Qatar Airways in 2018 to establish direct flights between Cardiff and Doha. The route was suspended due to COVID-19 in 2020 and has not been re-instated. The Welsh Government have stated subsidy is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

“With a global audience of five billion people, the World Cup offers a platform to take Wales to the world and to build on our previous activity to reconnect with existing audiences, including our global Welsh diaspora. It is the most significant marketing and sports diplomacy opportunity ever presented to Wales, given the profile of the event.”
Economy Minister Vaughan Gething

So against this backdrop of presenting Wales to the World, back in the UK, Wales performs worse on most indices of social deprivation than all of England and much of the rest of the UK. Its population is less ethnically and racially diverse than the most of the UK. Its major challenges centre around investment in its infrastructure, delivering public services and care to an ageing population, and enabling greater technical innovation within its economy – all legacies, many claim, of how Wales has been neglected in its industrial decline. Its devolved and elected government, the Senedd, has responsibilities for Agriculture, forestry and fishing, Education, Environment, Health and social care, Housing, Local government, Highways and transport but depends on funding agreements the UK government to deliver these services. Wales has limited control over taxes and tensions, old and new, persist between the people of Wales and UK's monarchical government, particularly when those tensions are grounded in left versus right leaning politics. Welsh folk-singer activist Dafydd Iwan's "Ni Yma O Hyd" and pop supergroup The Stereophonics' "As long as we beat the English" probably best capture the hopes of the Welsh nation for FIFA 2022.