

Tartan: A Short History [B1]

Questo modello di lana, estremamente caratteristico dei clan scozzesi, è diventato nel tempo un disegno molto popolare. Eppure, secondo alcuni, la sua mercificazione è una forma di appropriazione culturale.

The history of tartan, a [pattern](#) consisting of [criss-crossed](#) bands in multiple colours, is long and complex. What is clear, however, is its capacity to adapt to the times and stay relevant. It is usually associated with the quintessentially Scottish textile, but the [pattern](#) can also be found covering all kinds of objects. While its appeal seems [timeless](#), its omnipresence and its commercial use has led some to talk about the “Tartan Monster”.

CHIEFTAIN WEAR

Tartan is believed [to date back to](#) third-century Scotland, although it is difficult to find proof of this. The earliest representation of the tartan [pattern](#) comes from the 17th century; a painting by John Michael Wright titled Highland [Chieftain](#), for example, shows Lord Mungo Murray dressed in a tartan plaid and kilt. Tartan [clothing](#) was made of [wool](#), and it was worn as everyday wear by Highlanders, the clan societies of northern Scotland. The connection between tartan and subversion was reinforced in 1745, when an army of tartan-wearing Jacobites tried to dethrone Protestant King George II and restore the House of Stuart, a Catholic dynasty from Scotland. The [cloth](#) was subsequently [banned](#).

ROYAL INFLUENCERS

The ban on tartan [was lifted](#) in 1782, and in 1822 King George IV decided to make a move that led to the textile's revival. On the first royal visit to Scotland since the [uprising](#), the English king appeared in public in full Highland [attire](#) as a sign of [good will](#) and desire for unity. Twenty years later, Queen Victoria bought the Scottish castle Balmoral and decorated it in the

tartan [pattern](#). The popularity of the [cloth skyrocketed](#) in Scotland, where clan tartans were proudly [displayed](#) as a Scottish [badge](#), and [beyond](#).

AGAINST THE BRAND

Loud, energetic and rebellious, tartan was chosen by British icons of the 1970s counterculture to complement their powerful message. One of its most prominent proponents was fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, who dressed UK band the Sex Pistols. They wore tartan as a political statement, subverting its [commodification](#).

WORLDWIDE SUCCESS

Today, the Tartan Monster is alive and well: Scottish souvenir shops sell all kinds of tartan-[clad](#) objects. You don't even need to go to Scotland to buy tartan. All around the world, the [chequered pattern](#) can be seen worn on the streets and on the [catwalk](#). You can even visit a tartan museum... in Japan!

Glossary

- **-clad** = rivestito di
- **Chieftain** = capotribù
- **uprising** = insurrezione, rivolta
- **skyrocketed** = andare alle stelle
- **to date back to** = risalire
- **cloth** = stoffa, tela
- **was lifted** = abolire, sopprimere
- **attire** = abiti, stile
- **commodification** = mercificazione
- **pattern** = motivo
- **criss-crossed** = a linee incrociate
- **timeless** = eterno, senza tempo
- **badge** = segno, simbolo di
- **wool** = lana
- **banned** = banned
- **good will** = buona volontà
- **catwalk** = passerella
- **displayed** = esibire
- **beyond** = oltre, non solo
- **chequered** = a quadri