# UNESCO seeks to recognise Scotland's cultural icons



The United Nations is moving to compile a definitive list of cultural icons that encapsulate the essence of Scottish culture, with elements ranging from the whimsical to the sublime. Among the various traditions under consideration for recognition are the popular Scottish customs of the roll and square sausage, the traditional dance known as the Slosh, and Scotland's winter spectacle known as the Ne’erday Loony Dook. These pursuits and other unique traditions are being reviewed as part of the UK government’s initiative aiming to join UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The push for nominations is elicited from community groups across Scotland, encouraging them to identify the local customs, practices, and symbols that they believe best represent Scottish national identity. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has clearly articulated their aim: “UK Government wants communities to dig deep and nominate the practices that demonstrate what it truly means to be Scottish,” as stated in their guidance.

Various candidates for inclusion have already been highlighted. These include the wedding scramble, in which children scramble for coins tossed from a wedding car, and Shetland’s Up Helly Aa festival, renowned for its vibrant celebration of Viking heritage. The proposal list also encompasses more obscure traditions such as haggis hurling, a staple of Highland Games, showcasing the breadth of cultural expressions purposed for preservation.

Scottish Secretary Ian Murray commented on the initiative, articulating the importance of both historical customs and contemporary cultural phenomena. He stated, “This is a chance for community groups across Scotland to really have some fun... A respect for our age-old traditions will be covered, but so too should what’s important to us in modern Scottish life.”

Recent suggestions for inclusion highlight diverse aspects of Scottish life, from culinary delights like whisky and Irn Bru to lively gatherings such as ceilidhs and music festivals, including Celtic Connections and the Edinburgh Festival. There is also a recognition of the need to include cultural expressions from immigrant communities that have taken root in Scotland.

Further opportunities for nominations from the public will be encouraged starting this summer, providing communities a chance to propose traditions and practices that contribute to the rich tapestry of Scottish heritage. Additionally, there is an emphasis on ensuring the involvement and consent from communities regarding their submitted customs.

As the UK government works alongside the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for this culturally significant project, it is positioned within a broader intent to celebrate and promote Scotland's identity globally. The inclusion of these traditions in UNESCO’s inventory aims to underline the country's unique contribution to the global cultural landscape, while simultaneously recognising the diverse voices that constitute Scottish society today.

Under the auspices of this initiative, the Scottish Office is set to collaborate with various community groups to gather compelling nominations, thereby adding another layer of recognition to Scotland's rich cultural heritage.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-culture-media-and-sport> - This URL supports the role of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in initiatives related to cultural heritage in the UK, which aligns with their aim to recognize Scottish traditions.
* <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention> - This URL from UNESCO provides information about the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, a framework within which Scotland's cultural icons are being considered for recognition.
* <https://www.gov.scot/policies/culture-and-historic-environment/> - This Scottish Government webpage outlines policies related to culture and the preservation of historical environment, which supports the initiative to compile a list of Scottish cultural icons.
* <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places-to-visit/the-up-helly-aa-festival-shetland/> - This URL highlights the Up Helly Aa festival, one of the Viking traditions mentioned, showcasing Scotland's diverse cultural heritage.
* <https://www.visitscotland.com/about/uniquescotland/cultural-events/> - This VisitScotland page lists various cultural events in Scotland, including festivals that could be part of the cultural icons being considered for recognition.