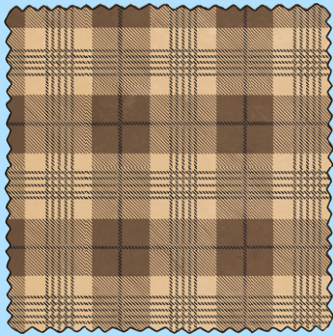
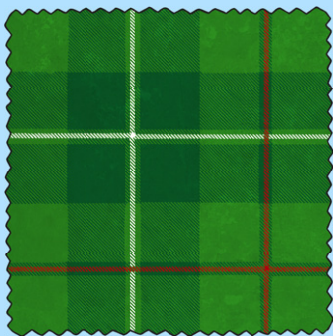


Tartan



Falkirk Tartan



Galloway Tartan



Royal Stewart Tartan



Black Watch Tartan

Tartan is a pattern consisting of criss-crossed horizontal and vertical bands in multiple colours. Tartans originated in woven wool, but now they are made in many other materials. Tartan is particularly associated with Scotland. Scottish kilts almost always have tartan patterns.

In the earliest times, tartans such as the "Falkirk" were produced in only the natural colours of the wool. However, the introduction of coloured dyes allowed much more interesting cloth to be produced.

The dyes were 'natural' (chemical dyes did not exist at that time) and were produced from lichen, tree bark, plant roots, or from the leaves and berries of plants and trees. The wool was prepared by first washing the wool and removing the oils, and then soaking the wool in an alkaline solution - usually made by adding soda ash prepared by burning seaweed. The washed wool, either before or perhaps after spinning, was then soaked in the dye.

Because the weavers were restricted to the colours they could produce from the local plants and flowers, tartans produced in the area were frequently reproduced in the same colours and frequently even in the same pattern. This tradition is maintained today in the wearing of the modern district tartan patterns Crieff, Galloway, Aberdeen, etc.

Now, thanks to the invention of chemical dyes, Tartan comes in many different and bright colours and it is no longer limited to textiles, but is used on other things such as paper, plastics, packaging, and wall coverings.

It is said that the most popular tartans still today are the Black Watch and the Royal Stewart.

