

# A Kid's Guide to England

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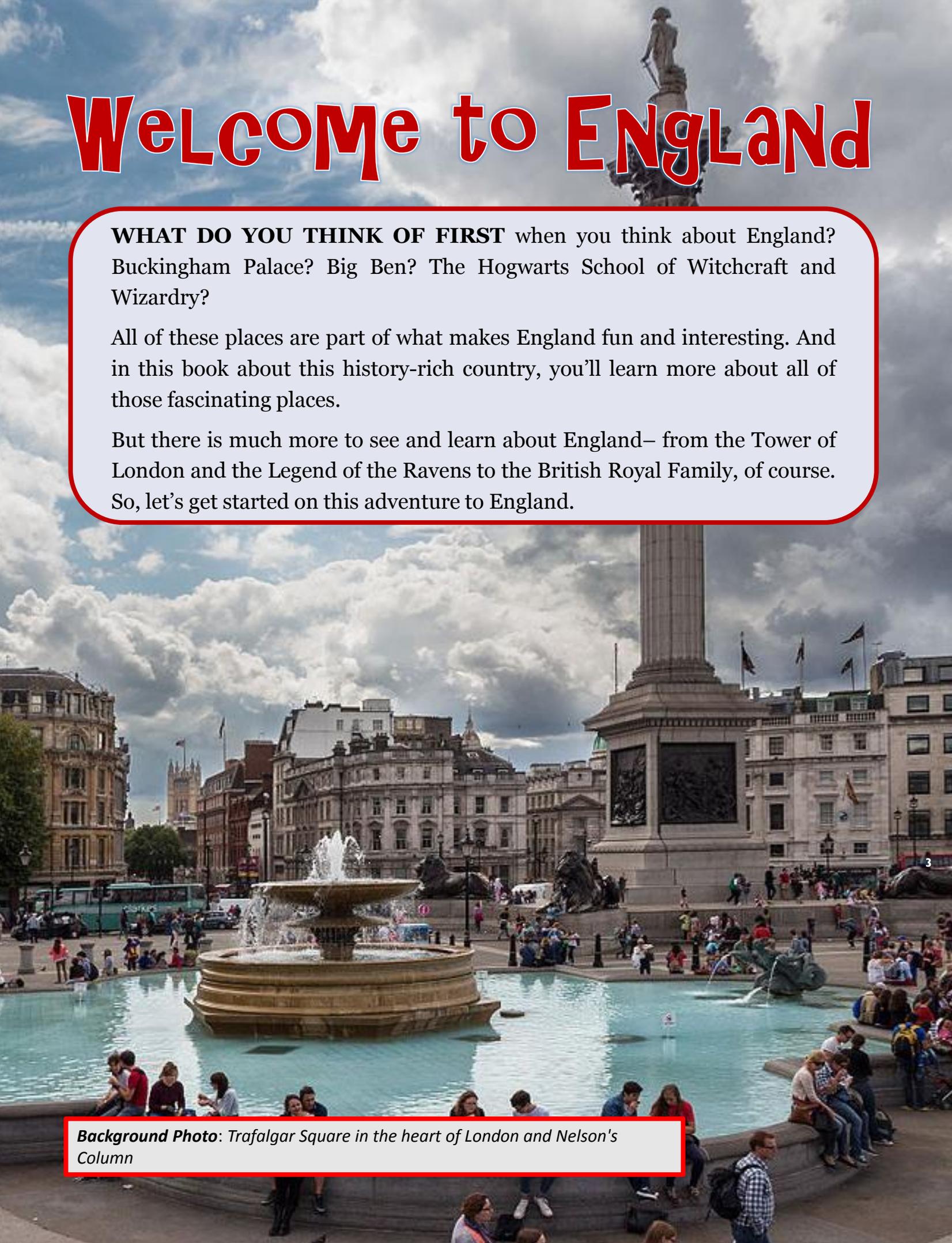
*Photo: Big Ben*

Photo Credit: IakovKalinin

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# Welcome to ENGLAND

The background of the page is a photograph of Trafalgar Square in London. In the center, there is a large, ornate fountain with multiple tiers and water spraying upwards. To the right, the tall, white Nelson's Column stands prominently. The square is filled with people, some sitting on the steps of the fountain, and various buildings of classical architecture surround the area. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK OF FIRST** when you think about England? Buckingham Palace? Big Ben? The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry?

All of these places are part of what makes England fun and interesting. And in this book about this history-rich country, you'll learn more about all of those fascinating places.

But there is much more to see and learn about England— from the Tower of London and the Legend of the Ravens to the British Royal Family, of course. So, let's get started on this adventure to England.

**Background Photo:** *Trafalgar Square in the heart of London and Nelson's Column*

# How to Speak British English

Do you speak English? Maybe not the way it's spoken in England. Let's see how good you are at understanding British English. Look at the words in the speech balloons. In the box below each word, write what you think the "American English" word is. (Answers on page 35.)

Jumper

Petrol

Loo

Lift

Mum

Trainers

Flat

Banger

*Photo:: Bodiam Castle in East Sussex England*

# FUN Facts ABOUT ENGLAND

George I, who reigned from 1714 to 1727, could speak only a few words of English.



There are 760 windows (give or take) in Buckingham Palace, the home of the British monarch. They are cleaned every six weeks.

## Harry Potter

J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books, was born in Yate, Gloucestershire, England. She is the first author ever to become a billionaire. BTW, J.K. stands for Joanne Kathleen.

French was the official language of England from 1066 to 1362.

The Thames River is the longest river in England. It's 215 miles (346 km) long.



# CHANGING THE GUARD

**EVERY MORNING AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE**, there is an important and colorful ceremony. It's called Changing the Guard (or, officially, Guard Mounting). That is when the "Old Guard" (the soldiers currently on duty) hands over responsibility for guarding the Palace to the "New Guard." A band provides a variety of music during the ceremony, which lasts about 45 minute.



Five regiments of the British Army form the Queen's Foot Guards (or King's Foot Guards when the monarch is a male). The guards stand at attention in front of their **sentry box**, not moving a muscle. But every 10 minutes or so they turn and march back and forth in front of their sentry box.

What happens if someone steps in front of the guard as he marches back and forth? The guard will shout "Make way for the Queen's Guard." With that , people usually move out of the way.

The Queen's Guard is a very special group of soldiers. They have been guarding the King or Queen of England for more than 500 years.

## What They Wear

It's hard to miss the Queen's foot guards. They definitely stand out in a crowd. They wear a deep red jacket (or tunic) and black bearskin (a tall fur cap).

# LONDON Eye



<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Swgreed>



*Inside one of the capsules on the London Eye..*

**THE LONDON EYE** (aka **Millennium Wheel**) is a giant Ferris wheel on the River Thames. It was built in 1999. At the time it was the tallest Ferris Wheel in the world.

The **diameter** is 394 ft (120 m). That's wider than a football field.

The wheel has 32 capsules. Each one hold up to 25 people, who can walk around in the capsule.

## **World's Tallest Ferris Wheels**

**1999: London Eye:** 443 ft (135 m)

**2006: Star of Nanchang** (China): 520 ft (158 m)

**2008 Singapore Flyer:** 541 ft. (165 m)

**2014 High Roller** (Las Vegas): 550 ft (168 m).

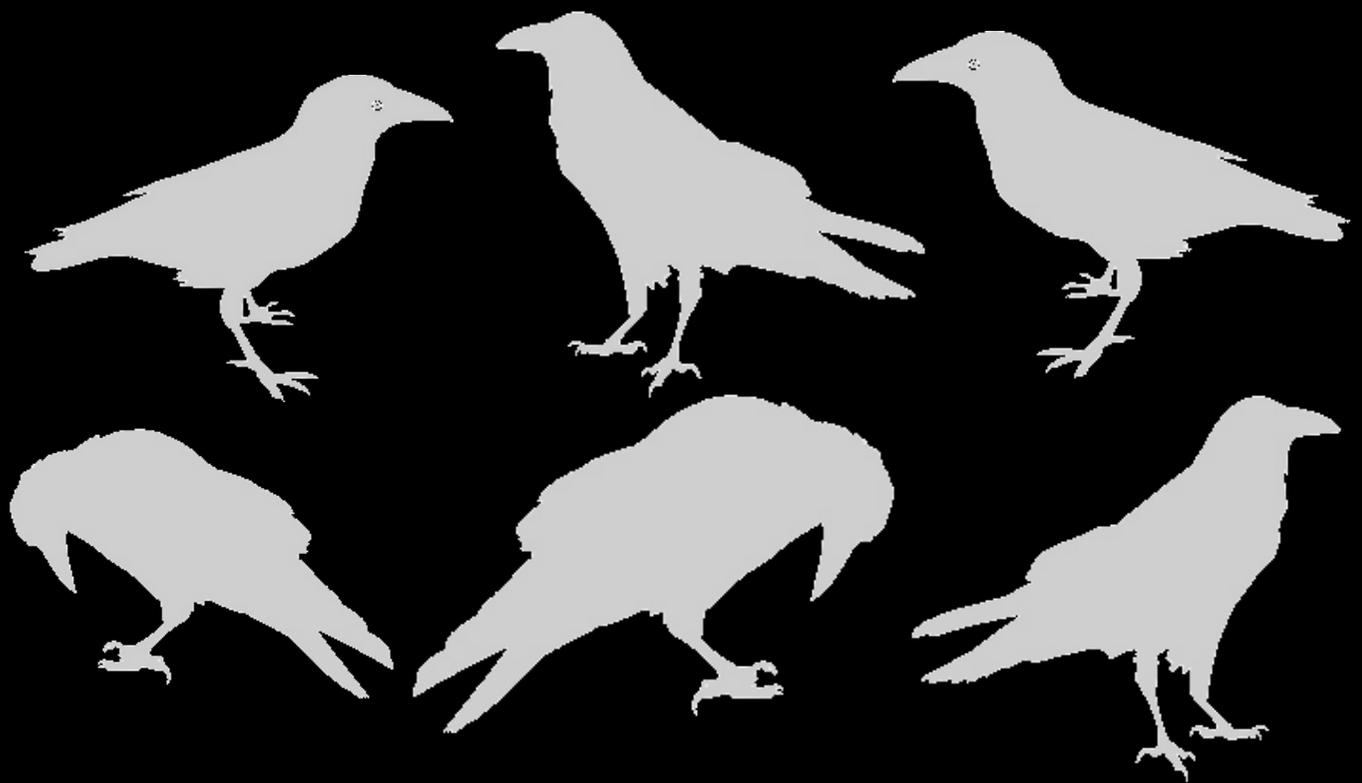
# THE TOWER OF LONDON

## THE LEGEND OF THE RAVEN

**FOR MORE THAN 350 YEARS**, six magnificent black birds, known as ravens, have occupied the Tower of London. (Not the same ones all that time, of course.) Legend has it that if these six ravens ever leave the fortress, the White Tower will crumble and a great disaster will befall all of England.

So just to be on the safe side, this group of crow-like birds lead a rather cushy life at the Tower, cared for by the Raven Master.

He makes sure the ravens get enough meat to eat – at least 8 ounces every day – as well as “bird biscuits soaked in blood.” Ugh! The Raven Master says they also love cheese.



# Queen Victoria

## Her Reign: 1837 - 1901



**UNTIL ELIZABETH II**, Queen Victoria ruled longer than any other British monarch in history. She was Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and later also Empress of India.

When she became queen at the age of 18, many people thought she would be a weak monarch and not accomplish much. But during her reign, Britain became the richest and most powerful country in the world.

Victoria's husband died when she was only 42 years old. For the rest of her life, she wore black in public.

During her reign, there were at least seven attempts to assassinate (or to kill) her. But she survived them all .

### **Fun Fact 1:** **Grandmother of Europe**

Victoria had nine children who married royalty or nobles throughout Europe and gave her 40 grandchildren. As a result, she got the nickname "Grandmother of Europe."

### **Fun Fact 2** **Happy Wedding**

Victoria proposed to her future husband, Albert. (Since she was Queen, he wasn't allowed to propose to her.) She also started the tradition of wearing a white wedding dress.

### **Fun Fact 3** **Long Live the Queen**

During her reign, 10 different men served as President of the United States – from Martin Van Buren, the 8<sup>th</sup> president of the United States to William McKinley, the 17<sup>th</sup> American president.

# Harry Potter's England

Do Diagon Alley, the Knight Bus bridge, or Platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$  at King's Cross train station mean anything to you? If so, then you must be a Harry Potter fan. And what better place to follow in the footsteps of Harry Potter and friends than in England, where much of the movie magic was filmed. Here are some of the places you might recognize from the movies.

**The Movie:** Diagon Alley and the Leaky Cauldron Pub.

**Real Life:** Leadenhall Market is a covered market in London. It was built in 1881. It was used to represent the area around Diagon Alley and the Leaky Cauldron.



Attribution: Photo by DAVID ILIFF. License: CC-BY-SA 3.0

**The Movie:** King's Cross Station, where students board the Hogwarts Express from the hidden Platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$ .

**Real Life:** The real King's Cross Railway station is more than 150 years old. It's on the northern edge of London. Today, at the station, you can find the hidden access to Platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$ .

