

BURNS NIGHT IN SCOTLAND

Each year Scottish people across the world celebrate a unique dinner known as Burns Night.

This is to remember a famous Scottish poet called Robert Burns. Traditionally it happens on his birthday, 25 January. Scotland can be very dark and cold at this time of year so it's an excellent reason to enjoy a large dinner with friends and family.

Burns is still an important figure in Scotland and even though he died in 1796 at the age of 37, he was recently voted 'The Greatest Scot'. His birthday has become as important as Scotland's national day, St Andrew's Day.

The idea for a dinner started over 200 years ago soon after his death and these days is actually quite a complicated affair, so here's a guide how to have a Burns Night.

To start, people are sat down at the table and the host reads a poem called *The Selkirk Grace*. It's normally done in a Scottish dialect which even English people find difficult to understand, but here you can find it translated into English as well:

Selkirk Grace (1)

Some hae meat and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat, and we can eat,
Sae let the Lord be thankit.

Selkirk Grace (2)

Some have meat and cannot eat,
Some cannot eat that want it;
But we have meat and we can eat,
So let the Lord be thankit (*thanked*).

Although Burns probably didn't actually write this, he is known to have read it at a dinner. Next, soup is served.

The highlight, though, is listening to a bagpiper playing as the main course of haggis arrives. It really has to be seen to be believed.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5t_d4Nb2fE

Haggis is a special dish made from a mixture of sheep heart, lung and liver and oats, which is a bit like a giant sausage and surprisingly tasty. So tasty, in fact, that Robert Burns wrote a poem about it called *Address to a Haggis*. Here is the first verse, with a translation into standard English:

Address to a Haggis

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o the puddin'-race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye worthy o' a grace
As lang's my arm.

Address to a Haggis - translation

Good luck to you and your honest, plump face,
Great chieftain of the pudding race!
Above them all you take your place,
Stomach, tripe, or intestines:
Well are you worthy of a grace
As long as my arm.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kzYaIphbzU>

Once this is finished there's a whisky toast (of course) to the haggis and people can finally eat.



Haggis

After dinner there's a speaker, who may recite more poetry, and a toast is made to the memory of Robert Burns. Next a male guest makes a funny speech about ladies and a female guest replies with a funny speech about men.

Throughout the rest of the night there is even more of Burns' poetry and lots more whisky. As a one-off dinner experience, Burns Night is hard to beat.

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/magazine/life-around-world/great-scot-burns-night-dinner>