



## **INTRODUCTION**

The phonetic spelling here is not an absolute; there are differences in dialects, accents and local nuances that are not included.

A list of links at the end of this PDF have further resources for learning and at least one of them is a route to learning local pronunciations.

I am not a teacher. However, I hope that this serves as a useful document for learners.

Languages are created by people and they evolve with people. Gaelic and Scots languages are both native tongues of Scotland. Both have been banned and had to fight for recognition as being 'equal to' English.

Speaking Gaelic or Scots is a political act.

Huge thanks to my native Gaelic speaking co-conspirators for their help creating this document.

You know who you are.

Welcome to the revolution.

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### **What are we eating?**

(Food)

### **F\*\*k this!**

Swearing: One of the fun things about learning a language is discovering how to swear in new ways. However, most of the Gaelic lessons don't cover this, so here are some of my favourites

### **Sounds like...**

Guide to letters and their pronunciation in Gaelic, a bit more technical.

### **Sense of Place**

Place names in Gaelic and Scots

### **Further Reading**

List of resources for Gaelic language

List of resources for Scots language

## General Chat

Hello  
Halo (Ha-low)

Good morning  
Madainn mhath (Matin vah)

Good day  
Latha Math (Lah mah)

Good day to you  
Deagh latha dhut! (joe lah ghoocht!)

Good Afternoon/Evening  
Feasgar Math (Feskir mah)

My name is  
Is mise (Iss mish-uh)

Whats your name?  
De an t-ainm a th'ort? (Jay an tenim a horsht?)

How are you?  
Ciamar a tha thu? (Kimmer a ha oo?)

I'm fine  
Tha gu math (Ha goo mah / Ha mi goo mah)

Thanks  
tapadh leat/leibh (tap-a lay / lyve)

You're welcome  
Se do bheatha (Sheh daw veh-huh!)

And yourself?  
Thu fhèin? (Oo hayn?)

Where are you from?  
Co as a tha thu? (Ko ass a ha oo?)

I'm from ....  
S'ann a ..... a tha mi (Sown a ..... a ha me)

I live in (insert town)  
Tha mi a fuireach ann an..... (Ha me a forr-awch own an.... )

Good night  
Oidhche Mhath (Eye-chuh Vah!)

Sleep Well  
Caidil gu math (Cachill koo mah)

Good evening everyone  
Feasgar math a h-uile duine (Feskir ma uh hool-uh doonya)

Goodbye  
Tioraidh! (Chee-u-ree!)

Bye for now  
Tioraidh an drast! (Chee-u-ree an drast)  
or  
An drast!.

See you again  
Chi mi a rithist thu (Ch-ee me a reeisht oo)

Well done!  
'S math rinn thu! (Smah rhine oo!)

Very Good  
Glè mhath! (Glay vah!)

Excellent!  
Math dha rìreabh! (Mah gha reer-iv!)

What are you doing just now?  
De tha thu a dèanamh an dràsta? (Jay ha oo a jee-aniv un dràsta?)

What you up to today?  
De do chor an diugh? (Jay daw kh awr un joo?)

I don't know  
Chan eil fhios agam (chahn-yel iss ah-kum)

I'm not doing anything  
Chan eil mi a' dèanamh càil (chahn-yel mee uh jee-ah-nuv kahl)

Where's the bathroom?  
Càit a bheil an taigh beag? (Kahtch uh vehl un tye bek?)

I love you  
Tha gaol agam ort (Hah geul ah-kum orsht)

I love you too  
Tha gaol agam ort-fhèin (Hah geul ah-kum orsht-heh-eeen)

Do you speak Gaelic?  
A bheil Gàidhlig agaibh? (uh vil gah-lik ah-kiv)

Yes, a little  
Tha, beagan. (hah, beck-un)

What did you say?  
Dè thuirt thu? (jeh hoorsht oo)

Say that again?  
Can a-rithist sin? (kahn uh-ree-isht shin)

I don't understand  
Chan eil mi a' tuigsinn (chan-yel mi uh-took-shin)

I'm sorry  
Tha mi duilich. (hah mee dooh-lich)

Excuse me  
Gabhaibh mo leisgeul. (gahv-iv moe lesh-kul)

Okay / Right enough  
"Ceart gu leòr." (kyarsht guh lywar)

That's very good  
Tha sin glè mhath! (hah shin gleh vah)

Please  
Ma 'se ur toil e. (mah sheh oor tul-leh)

Many thanks  
Mòran taing. (maw-run tah-eeng)

You're welcome  
Se do bheatha. (sheh doe veh-huh)

Bye for now  
Mar sin leibh an dràsda. (mahr shin leh-eev un drahss-tuh)

## What's it like outside?

It's a lovely day

Se lath brèagh a th'ann (Sheh la bree-uh a hown)

It's a nice day today

Ha e brèagha an diugh (Ha e bree-a un joo)

Its windy / Its really blowing today

Tha n gaoth a seidadh an diugh (Ha un gi-i a shay-ch ug un joo)

It's a wet day

Se latha fliuch a th'ann (sheh la flookh a hown)

It's a cold day

Se latha fuar/teth a th'ann (sheh la foor a hown)

It's a hot day

Se latha fuar/teth a th'ann (sheh la chay a hown)

Its raining

Tha an t-uisg ann (Ha an tooshg ow-n)

Its cloudy today

Tha e sgòthach an diugh (Ha e skaw-uch un joo)

Its raining

Tha an t-uisg ann (Ha un tooshk ow-n)

It is wet and cold today

Tha e fliuch is fuar an diugh (Ha e flooch iss foo-ar un joo)

The sun is shining today

Tha an grian a dearrsadh an diugh (Ha an gee-un a jarrsug un joo)

Its frosty today

Se latha reothtach a th'ann an diugh (sheh la raw-chuch a hown un joo)

## What and When is it?

What day is it today?

De lath a th'ann an diugh? (Jay la a how-n un joo?)

What day is it tomorrow?

De latha a bhios ann a màireach? (Jay la viss ow-n a marrach?)

Monday

Diluain (Jil-oo-eyen)

Tuesday

Dimairt (Jimarsht)

Wednesday

Diciadaoin (Jikee-adinn)

Thursday

Diardaoin (Jirrdinn)

Friday

Dihaoine (Jihnn-yuh)

Saturday

Disathairne (Jissah-urm-yuh)

Sunday

Didomhnaich (Jidawn – eech)

It was a long day today

Se latha fada bh'ann (se la fata a vow-n un joo)

What time is it?

De an uair a tha e? (Jay an oor a ha e?)

It's 3 o'clock

Tha e tri uair (ha e tree oo-irr)

or

1 – Aon (inn)

2 – Da (da)

3 – Tri (tree)

4 – Ceithir (kayhir)

5 – Coig (koe-ick)

6 – Sia (shee-ah)

7 – Seachd (shach-kh)

8 – Ochd (aw-chk)

9 – Naoi (nye)

10 – Deich (jaych)

11 – Aon uair deug (inn oor jee-ig)

12 – Da uair dheug (da oor jee-ig)

Half past

Leth uair as dèid (jay oor as jay)

## What are we eating?

Mealtime

Am biadh (Ow-m beeug)

What time are we having a meal?

De an uair a tha sinn a gabhail biadh? (Jay an oor a ha shin a gaal beeug?)

I'm eating

Tha mi ag ithe (Ha me ak eech-uh)

Food

Biadh (bee-ug)

What do you want?

Dè tha thu ag iarraidh? (jeh HAH oo ug EE-uh-ree)

I want a cookie!

Tha mi ag iarraidh briosgaid! (hah mi ug-ee-uh-ree briss-kahtch)

I want a cup of coffee

Tha mi ag iarraidh cupa cofaidh (Ha me ak ee-ar-ee coopa coffee)

I want a cup of tea

Tha mi ag iarraidh cupa ti (Ha me ak ee-ar-ee coopa tea)

I'm hungry

Tha an t-acras orm (Ha un tak-rus orom)

Are you hungry?

A bheil an t-acras ort? (A veil an takras orsht?)

You bet I'm hungry

Ceart gu leòr, tha an t-acras orm (Kyarsh t guh lyawr. Hahn tah-krus aw-rum)

I'd like to have breakfast

Bu toigh leam bracaist a ghabhail (Boo tuh LUH-oom braah-kawsht uh gah-ull)

Can I have a sandwich?

Am faigh mi ceapaire? (Am fye me cep-ir-uh?)

I'm thirsty

Tha am pathadh orm (Ha um pah-hug orom)

What will you have?

De ghabhas tu? (jay ga-as too?)

Give me a glass of wine

Thoir dhomh glainne fion (Hawr gong glann-yuh fee-on)

Give me a red wine please

Thoir dhomh fion dearg ma s'e do thoil e (Hawr ghong feeun jerak ma se daw hawl eh.)

Red/white wine  
Fìon dearg/geal (Fee-on jerak/gyal)

Orange Juice  
Sùgh orainds (soo orange)

I'm eating just now  
Tha mi ag ithe an dràsta (Ha me ak eech-uh un dràsta)

I'm drinking water  
Tha mi ag òl uisge (Ha me ak awl oosh-kuh)

I'd like a pint of beer, please  
Bu toigh leam pinnt leann, mas e do thoil e (boo till loom peench l-yoon, mas eh daw hawl eh)

I'd like ..... please  
Bu toigh leam ..... ma s'e do thoil e? (Boo till loom ....., mas e daw hawl eh)

Things to put in place of the dots above:

Soup  
Brot (Brawt)

Apple  
Ubhal (oo-ul)

Biscuit  
Briosgaid (brisk-itch)

Cheese  
Caise (Cash-uh)

Bread  
Aran (Arran)

Butter  
Im (eem)

Ham  
Hama (hama)

Egg  
Uigh (oo)

Potato  
Buntata (boon tata)

Roll  
Rola (Rawluh)

Fruit  
Measan (messun)

Vegetables  
Glasraichean (Glass-reechun)

Honey  
Mil (meal)

Chicken  
Cearc (cerk)

Thanks for that!  
Tapadh leat airson sin! (Tap-ah lacht air son shin!)

That was tasty  
Bha sin blasta! (Vah shin blast-uh!)

Cheers / Good health!  
Slàinte (Slanchuh)

## **F\*ck This!!**

Total C\*nt  
Criochnaich Fhaighean

F\*\*king idiot  
Amadan na galla

C\*nt / Pussy  
Baltan

Like hell I will  
Cha dèan mo chas

F\*ck Off  
Taigh Nam Gasta Ort

Get the F\* out of my craft room  
Mach às mo sheòmar-cheàirde

Bellend  
Clag Deireadh

F\* off reality  
Biodh taigh na galla air fìorachd

Fanny baws  
Fanaidh Balaichean

F\* the truth (of the matter)  
Biodh taigh na galla air an fhirinn

Prick  
Trealaich

Fart  
Tùd

Enormous Prick  
Ruinnse

Crabbit  
Craibte

Tit  
Cìoch / Glagan

Hell yeah!  
Gu dearbh fhèin!

Pish  
Fual

Bawbag  
Magairle

Go F\*ck Yourself  
Falbh dairich fhein

Shut the f\*ck up  
Duin d ghob / Dùin do chab

Get it right up ye  
Faigh E Deas Suas Fhein

Away and take your face for a sh\*te  
Falbh a ghabhail d ghnuis airson cac

Arsehole  
Tolla Thon

Wee sh\*t  
Cacan

Dickhead  
Bod Ceann

## Sounds Like...

### PRONUNCIATION GUIDE TO SCOTTISH GAELIC

Gaelic has only eighteen letters in its alphabet. There is no J, K, Q, V, W, X, Y or Z. A consonant + H creates a completely different sound to the same consonant without an H following it. Back vowels are those vowels that sound in the back of the throat ('aw', 'ur', 'oo', 'ow', 'aa', 'o', 'u', 'a') The rest are 'front vowels'.

### VOWELS

Gaelic words are stressed on the first syllable.

The guide to vowels only applies in stressed (or initial) syllables.

	GAELIC	SOUNDS LIKE	EXCEPT...
SIMPLE VOWEL (Use of accent signifies a longer version of vowel.)	<b>A</b>	like in <i>cat</i> , or the first part of the vowel in <i>cow</i> .	
	<b>À</b>	as in <i>father</i> .	
	<b>E</b>	short version of the sound in <i>bay</i> before the Y sets in; like French <i>é</i> .	
	<b>È</b>	longer version of the above.	
	<b>I</b>	short version of the sound in <i>see</i> .	
	<b>Ì</b>	as in <i>see</i> .	
	<b>O</b>	as in <i>cot</i> usually	before <b>B, BH, G, GH, M</b> and <b>MH</b> it sounds more like the French <i>au</i> in <i>jaune</i> .
	<b>Ò</b>	as in <i>law</i> .	
	<b>U</b>	short version of the sound in <i>food</i> ; like French <i>ou</i> .	
	<b>Ù</b>	as in <i>food</i> .	
SLENDER VOWELS	<b>E, I</b>		
BROAD VOWELS	<b>A, O, U</b>		
Combinations of Vowels	<b>AI, EI, ÒI</b>	Generally, an I following a vowel does not change its pronunciation, so <b>AI, EI</b> and <b>ÒI</b> are pronounced the same as <b>A, E</b> and <b>Ò</b>	

	<b>AO</b>	the OO sound in English "food", but with the <i>lips unrounded</i> , and sounded further back in the throat.	
	<b>EA</b>	just like a Gaelic E before the letters D, G and S	Elsewhere, it mostly has the sound of the English E in "bed".
	<b>EO and EÒ</b>	sound just like the Gaelic O and Ò, except that a Y sound is added before them when they come at the start of a word.	
	<b>EU, IA and Ì O</b>	like a Gaelic I and A run together, that is, like the English word "ear" (without the R)	
	<b>IO</b>	just sounds like I	
	<b>IU, IÙ and I ÙÌ</b>	like the Gaelic U and Ù	a Y sound is added before them when they come at the start of a word.
	<b>UA and UAI</b>	as in English <i>pure</i> or Northern <i>tour</i> .	
	<b>UI</b>	just sounds like U	<b>If its before M, N, NG and S</b> it sounds like the Gaelic <b>AO</b> instead.
Vowels in unstressed syllables	<b>A, E, EA</b>	make an 'uh' sound as in the second syllable of <i>butter</i> .	
	<b>AI, EI, I, OI, UI</b> make	a short 'i' sound as in <i>pin</i> .	
Vowels before LL, M and NN in stressed syllables	<b>A and EA</b>	make the ow sound of English <i>cow</i> .	In the case of EA, a Y sound is added before it when it starts a word, and it doesn't change before M.
	<b>AI</b>	Aye, or in English <i>sky</i>	
	<b>EI</b>		
	<b>I and U</b>	simply get lengthened	
	<b>IO</b>	becomes the long OO sound	Not before M  Gets a Y in front of it if a word starts with this set of vowels (eg <i>fionn</i> becomes <i>fyoon</i> )
	<b>O</b>	is lengthened to a sound similar to that in English <i>home</i> .	

	<b>OI</b>	a sound formed by running together a short 'uh' and an 'ee'.	
	<b>UI</b>	sound formed by running together the back-of-the-throat Gaelic <b>AO</b> sound and an 'ee'	
Vowels <b>after</b> LL/NN /M generally do not change apart from the following exceptions	<b>EA</b>	becomes a Gaelic short A, but still has a Y preceding it if it starts a word off.	
	<b>IO</b>	becomes a Gaelic short U. It also still has a Y preceding it if it starts a word off.	
Vowels before RR/RN/RD	<b>A, AI and E A</b>	lengthen to make a long À sound	
	<b>O and U</b>	lengthen to sound like Ò and Ù	this lengthening does not happen if a vowel follows the RR  it <i>does</i> happen if a vowel follows an RN or an RD. In these circumstances an EA ends up sounding like a short A
<b>Vowels in front of</b>  <b>BH, DH, GH and MH</b>		These tend to disappear when they come after a vowel. If you see them after a vowel, its safe to assume they are silent.  However, <b>they can change the sound of the preceding vowel</b>	DH almost always disappears. MH rarely does
	<b>A/EA before DH/GH</b>	the DH/GH is not silent, the A/EA become like the <i>ur</i> in English <i>burn</i> but further back in throat and shorter.	
	<b>AI before B H/DH/MH;</b>	lengthens to the sound of English <i>sky</i>	

	<b>AIGH</b> and <b>OIGH</b>	make the sound of <b>OI</b> before <b>LL</b> , that is, 'uh' and 'ee' run together.	
	<b>AOI</b> plus <b>BH/DH/GH/MH</b>	like an <b>AO</b> and an 'ee' run together	

## CONSONANTS

	GAELIC	SOUNDS LIKE	EXCEPTIONS
SLENDER CONSONANT		<p>A group of consonants will only ever have broad vowels on both sides.</p> <p>When many consonants are surrounded by slender vowels (called a slender consonant), they change their sounds to sound as though they have a Y following them.</p> <p>Consonants do exactly the same in English when followed by a U. Thus the initial sounds of the words <b>ceann</b>, <b>dearg</b> are the same as the initial sounds of <i>cure</i>, <i>dune</i>.</p>	
BROAD CONSONANTS (consonants surrounded by broad vowels)	<b>F, L, LL, M, N, NN</b> and <b>S</b>	All sound as they do in English	Slender <b>S</b> is pronounced as the English SH.
	<b>H</b>	as in English, but only when it's found in isolation (rare)	If it comes after a consonant, it alters the sound of the preceding consonant instead of having its own sound

	<b>P, T and C</b>	as in English	if found in the middle or end of words you should add a very slight 'kh' sound before them, almost no more than a little extra breath.
	<b>B, D and G</b>	as in English <i>only</i> at the beginnings of words.	Elsewhere they sound like English P, T and C respectively.
	<b>R and RR</b>	Rolled and never left out	
	<b>BH and MH</b>	both pronounced as the English V	
	<b>CH</b>	as in <i>loch</i> or German <i>Bach</i> .	
	<b>GH and DH</b>	these are to CH as G is to C, i.e. with the mouth and tongue in the same place but with the vocal cords vibrating.	
	<b>FH</b>	Is silent	
	<b>PH</b>	As in English	
	<b>SH and TH</b>	As in the English H	
	<b>RD and RT</b>	Gaelic inserts a SH sound into the combinations RD and RT. Therefore <b>aird</b> 'aarsht'	
SLENDER CONSONANTS	Slender <b>B</b>	is like the BY in English <i>beauty</i> at the beginning of a word, and like the PY in English <i>puke</i> elsewhere.	
	Slender <b>C</b>	is just like the CY in English <i>cute</i> ,	<b>CH</b> is pronounced like the German <i>ich</i> ; that is to say, rather like an H and a Y run together and said with more force.  Slender <b>GH</b> and <b>DH</b> are as above, but rather like a severely overdone Y
	slender <b>SH</b>	like HY in <i>hew</i> ,	

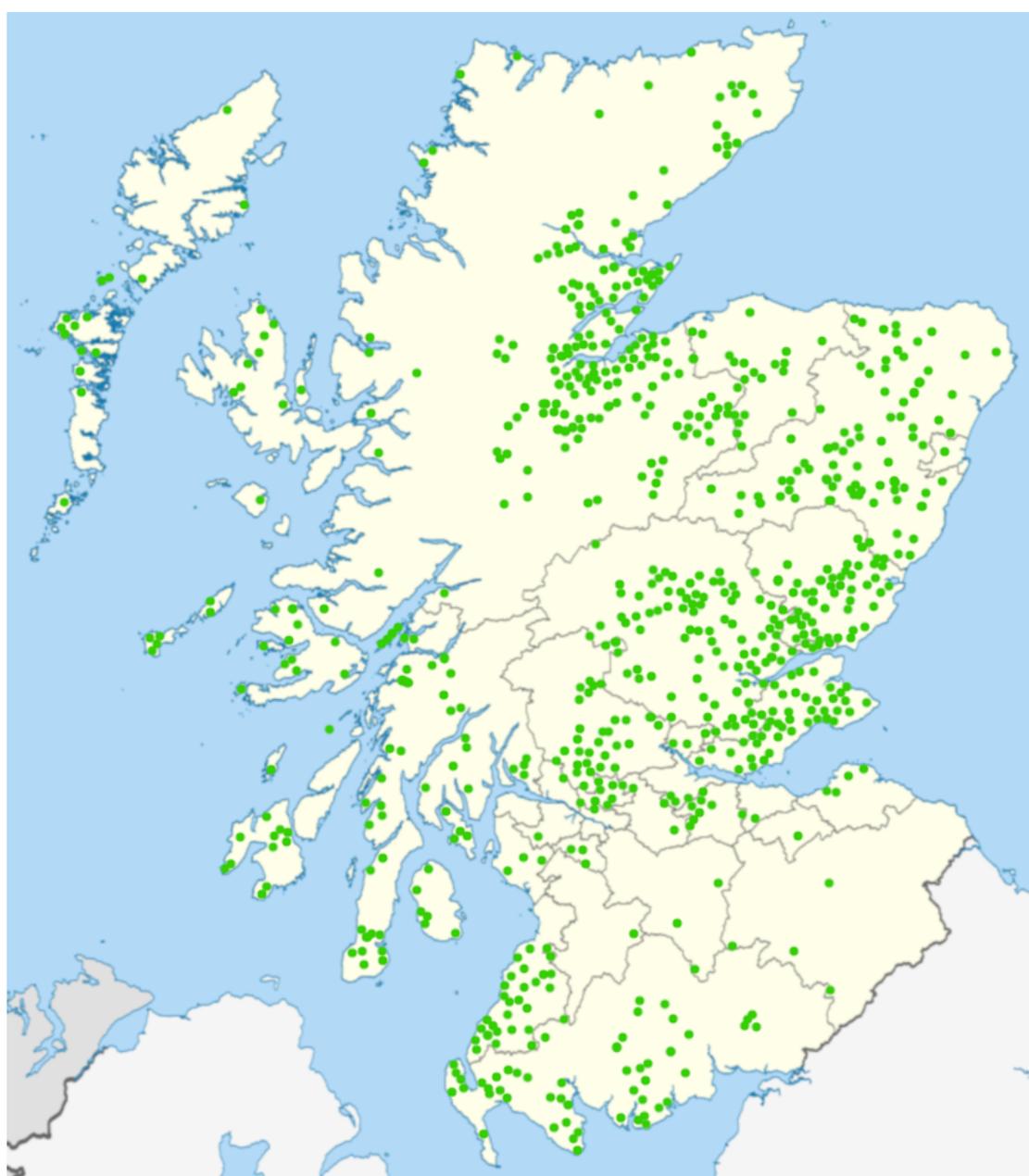
	slender <b>L</b>	is like the LY in <i>million</i>	<b>L</b> only slenderises at the beginning of a word.
	slender <b>BH</b>	is just like the VY in English <i>view</i> .	<b>B, BH, M, MH, F, FH, P, PH, S H</b> and <b>TH</b> only slenderise before a back vowel
	<b>LL, NN</b> and <b>RR</b>	slenderise as expected	<b>N</b> only slenderises initially or after a back vowel.  <b>R</b> slenderises everywhere <b>except</b> at the beginning of a word.

## Sense of Place

Scottish Gaelic is not the only native language used in Scotland. There are far more Scots speakers and yet we do not have a Scots language TV channel and the idea of writing official documents in Scots hasn't happened since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which is weird to me.

However, we can get a sense of both these languages and how they work alongside each other by looking at maps. The names of our hills and towns all give us a clue as to the use of our native tongues throughout our history.

Below is a map, which shows place names in Scotland that contain the element BAL, which is either from the Scottish Gaelic baile or bealach meaning Village or pass, farmstead, town or home. Giving some indication of the extent of medieval Gaelic settlement in Scotland.



This is a table of place names, which show some origins of other names in our landscapes:

<b>Scots form and spelling</b>	<b>Origin Meaning(s) in English</b>
Aiber	from Brittonic aber - Mouth
Ach	from Gaelic achadh - Field
Auchter	either from Gaelic achadh or uachdar Field or upland
Auld	from Anglo-Saxon ald Old
Bal	either from the Scottish Gaelic baile or bealach meaning Village or pass, farmstead, town or home.
Bey	from French baie and Middle English bay(e) - Bay
Boonds	variously from Latin bodina, French bonne and Middle English bound(e) - Boundary, limits
Brae	variously from Anglo-Saxon bru, Norse brá and Gaelic bràigh - Hillside
Braes (see above, means Foothills)	
Brig	from Anglo-Saxon brig Bridge
Burgh or Broch	variously from Anglo-Saxon burh, and Norse borg Borough
Burn	from Gaelic bùrn –‘water’ Stream
Cleuch / cleugh	from Middle English cloghe Gorge or ravine
Craig	from Gaelic creag Crag
Dal	from Gaelic dail Field
Drum	from Gaelic druim Ridge
Dum or Dun	from Gaelic dun Fort or hill

## Further Reading

### Learn Gaelic

[www.learnghaelic.net](http://www.learnghaelic.net)

[www.duolingo.com](http://www.duolingo.com)

[www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/gaidhlig/ionnsachadh/](http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/gaidhlig/ionnsachadh/)

Learning for children aged 0-3: [www.gaelic4parents.com/0-3-years](http://www.gaelic4parents.com/0-3-years)

### Learn Scots

It is another of our native tongues and it is spoken by far more people than Scottish Gaelic, yet there isn't a Scots language channel.

[www.scotslanguage.com](http://www.scotslanguage.com)

[www.dsl.ac.uk](http://www.dsl.ac.uk)

[www.cs.stir.ac.uk](http://www.cs.stir.ac.uk)

### Place names in Gaelic

This is a great site for searching for the Gaelic names you are familiar with and ones, which you need a Gaelic equivalent of:

[www.ainmean-aite.scot](http://www.ainmean-aite.scot)

If you found some cool resources you'd like to include in any future versions of this, or you like the cover art, find me on Instagram and drop me a DM @eileenbudd