

Hadrian preferred to invest in the development of stable, defensible borders and the unification of the empire's disparate peoples. **Hadrian's Wall** ([Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language): *Vallum Aelium*), also known as the **Roman Wall**, **Picts' Wall**, or *Vallum Hadriani* in Latin, is a former defensive fortification of the [Roman province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_province) of [Britannia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Britain), begun in AD 122 in the reign of the emperor [Hadrian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Wall#cite_note-3) It ran from the banks of the [River Tyne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Tyne%2C_England) near the North Sea to the [Solway Firth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solway_Firth) on the [Irish Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Sea), and allowed the [Roman Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Empire) to project power some distance to the north, into the lands of the northern [Ancient Britons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Britons), including the [Picts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picts).

It had a stone base and a stone wall. There were [milecastles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milecastle%22%20%5Co%20%22Milecastle) with two [turrets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turret_%28Hadrian%27s_Wall%29) in between. There was a fort about every five [Roman miles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mile#Roman_mile). From north to south, the wall comprised a ditch, wall, [military way](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_Way_%28Hadrian%27s_Wall%29) and [vallum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vallum_%28Hadrian%27s_Wall%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Vallum%20%28Hadrian%27s%20Wall%29), another ditch with adjoining mounds. It is thought the milecastles were staffed with static [garrisons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garrison), whereas the forts had fighting garrisons of infantry and cavalry. In addition to the wall's defensive military role, its gates may have been [customs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Customs) posts.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Wall#cite_note-4)

A significant portion of the wall still stands and can be followed on foot along the adjoining [Hadrian's Wall Path](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Wall_Path). The largest Roman archaeological feature in Britain, it runs a total of 73 miles (117.5 kilometres) in [northern England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_England).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Wall#cite_note-5) Regarded as a [British cultural icon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_the_United_Kingdom), Hadrian's Wall is one of Britain's major ancient tourist attractions.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Wall#cite_note-6) It was designated as a [UNESCO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) [World Heritage Site](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) in 1987.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Wall#cite_note-7) In comparison, the [Antonine Wall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonine_Wall%22%20%5Co%20%22Antonine%20Wall), thought by some to be based on Hadrian's wall (the Gillam hypothesis),[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Wall#cite_note-8) was not declared a World Heritage site until 2008.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Wall#cite_note-9)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Wall#cite_note-10)