



Daily Life in Tudor England: How People Really Lived

KS2 HISTORY

KS3 HISTORY

Ages 10-14 ⌚ 4 min read

Who Were the Tudors?

The **Tudor family** ruled **England** from **1485** to **1603**. The most famous Tudor king was **Henry VIII**, who had six wives! During this time, England was changing rapidly. New ideas were spreading, trade was growing, and people's lives looked very different depending on whether they were rich or poor, royal or ordinary.

Life for Kings and Queens

If you were born into the royal family, life was luxurious but strict. Tudor kings and queens lived in magnificent **palaces** like **Hampton Court** and **Whitehall**. They wore expensive clothes made from silk, velvet, and gold thread. Their meals included exotic foods like peacock, venison, and fresh fruit.

However, royalty had huge responsibilities. Kings had to make important decisions about laws, religion, and wars. They spent hours in meetings and ceremonies. Children of nobility were taught languages, music, dancing, and how to fight, even from a young age.

Think of it like being the most famous person in school—everyone watches what you do, you get the best opportunities, but you also have the most rules to follow and the most pressure.

Life for Merchants and Townspeople

In towns like **London**, merchants and skilled workers had busy, interesting lives. They lived above their shops—a baker lived above the bakery, a blacksmith above the forge. Most people worked six days a week, with Sunday reserved for church.

Merchants traveled to distant countries buying and selling goods like spices, cloth, and wool. This was exciting but dangerous—journeys took months, and nobody had maps like we do today. Towns had markets, theaters, and taverns where people gathered to chat and share news.

Life for Peasants and Farmers

Most Tudor people were **peasants** or farmers who worked on land owned by richer lords. Life was hard—people woke before sunrise and worked until sunset. Families lived in small cottages with just one or two rooms, often shared with animals for warmth during winter.

Food was simple: bread, pottage (a thick vegetable stew), cheese, and eggs. Meat was expensive and rare, eaten only on special occasions. People made their own clothes from wool and linen. Many peasants never traveled more than **20 miles** from their village in their entire lives.

Think of it like living in a house with no electricity, no running water, and doing all your chores by hand—imagine washing clothes in a river and cooking on a fire every single day.

What Did People Do for Fun?

Even hard-working Tudors found time for entertainment. Richer people enjoyed **hunting**, chess, and cards. Theater was becoming popular—**William Shakespeare** wrote plays during this period! Poorer people played games, danced, told stories, and attended **church fairs**.

Tudor life was vastly different from ours—no electricity, no cars, no hospitals as we know them—yet people found joy in community, creativity, and small celebrations.