

# Medieval Stallholder Requirements Guide



**Your guide to getting it right!**

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# 1.0 Welcome to the Middle Ages!

A time of tournaments, knights, monasteries, manors and markets.

The modern perception of what the Medieval Period looked like has been heavily influenced by pop-culture and modern media. This guide is designed to help you differentiate the fact from the fiction to create the most authentic Medieval stall you can. If in doubt, the best thing to do is ask, we are here to help!

One thing to keep in mind is that the Abbey Medieval Festival is a fundraiser for the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology, just a 5-minute walk from where the Festival is held at Abbeystowe. Our Museum has an emphasis on education, and since its inception 40 years ago, the Festival has helped educate our patrons about what life was like in the Middle Ages by creating an interactive, engaging, and immersive experience. Step back in time with us and help us create the most authentic, historically accurate Medieval Festival in Australia!

Imagine stepping into the hustle and bustle of a busy Medieval marketplace. Traders, craftspeople and merchants of all kinds sell their wares around you, shouting and vying for the attention of the crowd. Baskets of goods are displayed on wooden trestle tables. Illiteracy is the norm in the Medieval world, so stall and shop signs use pictures instead of words. The sounds, smells and sights are a mix of familiar and foreign. Everyday people dress in **brightly coloured fabrics made of wool or linen**. Contrary to popular belief, the Middle Ages were highly colourful, with clothing, fabrics and goods in many shades including **blues, reds, greens, browns and yellows**. Men wear decorative hoods and hats, and ladies mostly covered their hair as a sign of modesty.



*Do you fit this picture? Would you like to? Let us answer your questions and help you tailor your stall and goods into something truly Medieval.*

## 2.0 Common Stallholder Worries

### **Medieval clothing is uncomfortable and not practical!**

The image many people have of Medieval clothing is often based on pop-culture and is very impractical and uncomfortable. But you don't have to worry- authentic Medieval clothing is comfortable- remember many people were doing hard physical jobs, comfort is important! See [6.0 Staff Costuming](#) for more information.

### **It's too expensive to change the look of my stall.**

It doesn't have to be! Check out the hints and tips in [4.0 Dressing up your stall on a shoestring budget](#). While we do want a certain look that might be a little different to your normal stall, we are here to help and don't want your set up to be prohibitively expensive.

### **Why isn't my stock "Medieval" enough?**

We don't allow a number of items because they didn't exist in the Medieval period, they hadn't reached the part of the world our Festival focusses on, or in the case of food, it wasn't eaten. There are heaps of alternatives though, so keep reading, and if you're unsure just ask us! [3.0 Fact vs. Fiction](#) will also give you some more information on Medieval historical accuracy.

### **I don't want to have leftover "Medieval" stock if I make up things specially and don't sell it.**

We had over 25,000 people at the 2025 Festival and many stallholders regularly sell out of stock. Our Festival attracts a very targeted audience every year who want to see and buy Medieval goods. We are also selective with our vendors- we want variety in the types and price points of stock, so all our patrons can find something to suit their tastes and budgets, and to minimise competition between our vendors. See the [7.0 Your Goods](#) for more information.

### **Non-Medieval stock, like fairy wands, glittery dragons, and fantasy clothing sell well.**

Thousands of people come to the Festival each year to be part of an *authentic* Medieval experience. We strive to give the public a historically accurate look into the Middle Ages. Visitors like to go home with something that could have been worn or used 1500 - 500 years ago, not something they can buy at any festival or market. See [3.0 Fact vs Fiction](#).

### **How can people find me if I don't have a sign?**

You can have a sign! It could be your logo or a picture of an item that best represents what you are selling or your business. See [4.0 Dressing up your Stall on a Shoestring Budget](#) for ideas. Patrons also have access to maps in our program guide which includes a list of stalls at the Festival to help them find you. And we showcase our vendors on social media in the lead-up to the Festival each year- putting you, your stall and your stock in front of our online audience of more than 45,000 people.

### 3.0 Fact vs. Fiction: The Middle Ages and Pop-Culture

As previously mentioned, the Abbey Medieval Festival is run by the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology, a registered not-for-profit organisation. The proceeds of the Festival help keep the Museum running, and for the past 40 years the Museum has had a strong emphasis on public education. This is why the Festival aims to be as historically accurate as possible.

It's true that pop-culture and Ren Faire culture have had a massive impact on what audiences think the Middle Ages would have looked like. In addition, widespread but outdated descriptions and perceptions of the Middle Ages (such as calling it the "Dark Ages") means that many of our patrons may have some wrong ideas about the Medieval period. This is why these requirements exist- the Festival is an extension of the educational ethos of the Museum, and our vendors along with our reenactors help us to create an environment within which patrons can learn more accurately what the Middle Ages of Europe and the Middle East might have looked, smelled, and felt like. This may not be for everyone, but if you do decide you would like to take up the challenge, many of our vendors find it an incredible experience.

We base our requirements on up-to-date research and accurate historical information. Fantasy goods do sell well, but they are not accurate representations of history. Costuming elements like wand holsters, potion jars, and waist corsets are all modern pop-culture or fantasy creations. When it comes to children's toys, very few examples survive, but where they do, they are usually miniatures of adult tools such as cooking sets, hobby horses and wooden swords. Dolls that survive are made of fabric scraps and are very simple, dressed in styles that would have been familiar to or worn by the owner (i.e. peasant children would not own a dolly dressed like a princess). There is currently no evidence of imaginative play such as stuffed toy dragons in the Middle Ages. People also weren't eating giant turkey legs (turkeys are American), but they may have been eating pork knuckles.

Another common question concerns witchcraft and fortune telling. The concept of witches is a tricky subject that cannot be done proper justice here, but in short the Medieval view of witches is heavily conflated with the modern practices of Wicca, witchcraft and paganism- which are more modern, valid religious/spiritual beliefs. Put simply, people in the Middle Ages believed that witches existed, but it is not the view we have now. For example, women with herbal knowledge were not witches making potions, they were people who had deep knowledge of the properties that God had imbued certain plants with. In fact, it was mostly monasteries that grew and cultivated these species, which is why many medicinal plants carry religious names- Rosemary, St John's Wort, Holy Basil, etc. Similarly, Medieval people believed certain minerals had some intrinsic benefits, but it was very different the properties assigned to crystals now. Practices such as Tarot reading and palmistry also did not exist the way they do now- for example, while Tarot cards existed in the Middle Ages, they were only used as playing cards until much later. This is why many of these things do not appear at the Festival- they're either not historically accurate based on available evidence, or their modern uses are significantly different to their recorded historical uses.

There are many more examples of modern beliefs about the Medieval world that are not consistent with current evidence, these are just some common ones. The rest of this document aims to dispel some of those beliefs to help you make your stall as accurate as possible. As always, if in doubt, please just ask! We want to help you- it makes the Festival better for everyone.

## 4.0 Dressing up your Stall on a Shoestring Budget!

**Everyone at the Festival has a character**- from our volunteers to our stallholders. You are playing the part of a Medieval merchant or craftsperson- higher in social rank than a peasant, but lower than nobility. **Your stall should aim to match this social class**, and any unavoidable modern equipment needs to be covered or disguised. In this section you will find some do's and don'ts that will help you get your stall looking just right.

### 4.1 Your Stall Tent

Historically accurate tents, from A-frames to Geteld tents, always have the best look for a Medieval stall. However, these tents are **expensive** and can be cumbersome. If you have access to one – we love having them at the Festival. If you don't, **a properly dressed pop-up marquee is OK**. To do this- ALL aluminium framing (legs and supports) must be **fully covered**- calico or hessian are fine, wrapped or hung and pinned. **Don't forget the underside of the tent looking in**. The plastic cover ideally should also be **covered in full**. White plastic covers MAY be acceptable, but **the branding logo MUST be covered**. Coloured plastic marquee covers look undeniably modern, so should be fully covered- preferably with calico, but otherwise hessian is also acceptable.

### 4.1 Stall Name and Signage

When choosing a name for your stall, think about the Middle Ages. Vendors were trying to convey what they sold, so **names were functional**. Referencing your stock and keeping it simple is best. Think “Baker”; “Blacksmith”; “Furrier”; etc.

Display your logo on a **wooden or calico sign**. The less writing you use, the better your stall will look. **Painted fabric banners** using pictures are also effective. These signs also have the benefit of being accessible to a range of audiences. Don't underestimate what you can do with some calico and fabric paints!



### 4.2 Price Tags

Avoid tagging individual items or using stick-on tags. Use a small sign which applies to an entire basket. Avoid using “dollars” or “\$”, instead use language like “12 gold pieces”.

### 4.3 Colour Schemes

**USE:** Shades of greens, blues, mustards, yellows, reds, burgundies, tans, browns - both muted tones and bright, bold colours are appropriate and look festive. Slightly faded colours also give the look of well-used fabric in the case of clothing and covers- fabric was expensive and continuously reused, make it look like you've been doing this for years!

White and off-white is also common as it was surprisingly easy to keep clean and it didn't fade like other colours did. Unbleached calico is relatively cheap, widely available, and works very well.

**DO NOT USE:** Purples and pinks - these were not used by the middle classes. Remember if you are running a stall in a marketplace, you are not representing nobility!

## 4.4 Presenting your Goods

Goods should be displayed in:

- **woven baskets**
- unpainted **wooden boxes or bowls**



Baskets and wooden bowls of all sizes are often available from Op shops. If you're struggling, modern containers wrapped in natural fabrics like calico also work in a pinch.

## 4.5 Packaging your Goods

Plastic bags are **NOT** allowed- they don't meet our sustainability policy, and they are not Medieval.

- Use paper bags instead
- If you're feeling creative, stamp your logo on the bag as a form of advertising

## 4.6 Throws and Hangings

- **Use plain colours with simple patterns if any at all:** Tapestries and embroideries would have been expensive and not used for a merchant stall.
- **Use accurate imagery:** E.g. only use Celtic patterns if your business sells Celtic goods.

## 4.7 Tablecloths

- A **plain white bedsheet, woollen blanket** or **woven picnic blanket** are usually inexpensive and look great. Patterns or checks were not used.
- A **tea towel** in a plain colour makes a cheap cloth to line a basket with.
- **Lambswool** or **cowhide** also look great to cover benches if you have one. **Please don't use kangaroo skins.**
- If you have a modern plastic trestle, you **need to ensure that your tablecloth is secure and reaches the ground.**
- **DO NOT USE** velvet or crushed velvet (see **4.9 crushed velvet** below).



## 4.8 Storage of Stock

Table covers should reach the ground and conceal boxes of stock not on display **especially** if you are using modern storage boxes. Period-appropriate ideas for storage include:

- **Wooden chests** – secure place for valuables, also doubles as seating.
- **Sacks** – plain, unprinted calico or hessian sacks cover a multitude of sins.
- **Woollen blankets** in plain colours as covers for anything that can't be stashed.

## 4.9 Crushed Velvet

Many "Medieval" style costumes are made from crushed velvet, but it did **not** exist in the Middle Ages. Proper velvet, which did exist in the Middle Ages, was prohibitively expensive for all but nobility. Sumptuary laws often prevented middle and lower classes from wearing or using expensive cloths as well.

**Stallholders should not use crushed velvet for any aspect of their stall or costume under any circumstances.**

## 5.0 Food Stalls: The Medieval Diet

As an immersive experience, we want patrons to have the unique experience of what life in Europe and the Middle East might have been like in the Middle Ages. This includes the ingredients Medieval people had available to them. Although the Festival does cover a slightly broader range generally, for our Merchant vendors, **we only accept food items that would have been broadly available in Europe and/or the Middle East during the period of 500 AD – 1500 AD.** We know this may be a challenge for some vendors, but it is an exciting opportunity to be creative and try something new.

**The following items were not eaten in Medieval Europe or the Middle East and as such, are not accepted at the Festival:**

- Tomatoes, potatoes (including chips), corn, pumpkin, squash, sweet potato, pineapple, chilli, and anything chocolate.
- Ice creams, fairy floss etc.
- Carbonated drinks, cola.

**Items you can sell include:**

- Meats (incl. bacon and other dried meats) and seafood.
- Berries, apples, pears, oranges and lemons.
- Beans, peas, rice.
- Old World root vegetables like beets, turnips and carrots.
- Bread and pastry.
- Dairy products, honey, most nuts, marzipan.
- Ginger beer.
- Juice such as pear, apple, orange, lemon, pomegranate.
- Non-alcoholic cider.
- Cordials/syrups with water: rose, lavender, elderflower.
- Tea and coffee.

**NB.** Bottles with a pop-top and cap or that come in plastic or glass bottles are not to be sold as they are not environmentally friendly and do not meet our sustainability policy.

**Important points:**

- Beverages are not to be sold in glass bottles.
- As part of our sustainability policy, food vendors are required to **serve their items on/in materials that are either made from recycled material or are recyclable (see 2026 Terms & Conditions document).**
- Throw-away eating utensils are to be bio-degradable, **not plastic.**
- While we understand modern appliances can't always be hidden, it adds to the atmosphere when they can't be seen, so an effort should be made to disguise or obscure them from patrons.

**Please see the food appendix at the end of this document for a more comprehensive list. If you are unsure if a food item on your menu is acceptable, please ask. Failure to comply with these requirements may lead to you being uninvited from future events.**

## 6.0 Staff Costuming: Dress for Success!

Many people have misconceptions about real Medieval clothing. **Remember you're a merchant**, not nobility, so **dress accordingly**. This section will help you with putting costumes together for yourself and your staff. We **do not** accept modern clothing such as jeans and t-shirts (see 6.2.2 *Inappropriate Clothing Items*). **However**, we recognise the need for accessibility and safety for your staff, and compliance with Workplace Health and Safety and food handling practices always come first. Some clothing may not be suitable for food production, and equipment such as aprons and gloves for food preparation should always be used when necessary. Similarly, accessibility aids such as prescription glasses, mobility aids and hearing aids are permitted. As always, if you are unsure about something, please ask!

### 6.1 Easy Answers for Comfortable Clothes

**The clothes are uncomfortable. The lacing is tight and the big sleeves are impractical. I can't work like that!**

We don't expect you to! In the Middle Ages both men and women often wore loose-fitting tunics and dresses that pulled on over the head and held in place with a belt. See 6.2 *Preparing a Costume* for basic ideas, or *Appendix 2.0 Clothing* for a full breakdown.

**I look and feel stupid in a veil. Why should I wear one?**

The Medieval Period was very broad. While it is true veils and other head coverings were common, they were not universal. In some places, only married women wore veils. While historical authenticity is a major consideration, comfort is also important. *Appendix 2.0 Clothing* gives a detailed breakdown of fashions at different times in the Middle Ages to help you. If you are unsure about a veil, try thinking about it in a different way: it can enhance your look and be practical- they help protect you from sunburn and double as a kind of hair net for food vendors. Veils range in materials, can be short or long, and worn in a variety of ways. Some styles of hats are an appropriate alternative, such as a plain straw hat or a bycoket hat.



**I'm not wearing tights or hose.**

Try drawstring trousers. As above, many different trouser types were worn over the Medieval Period in many different places by different levels of society. Reading about different types of clothing will help you find something you are comfortable wearing.

**Having an outfit made is expensive.**

Buying historically accurate reproduction clothing from quality vendors can indeed be expensive, but this is not a requirement. If you or a helpful family member is handy with a sewing machine or a needle, you can make an outfit yourself (see some examples below), or if you are savvy, you may be able to find appropriately Medieval-passing clothing in your local op shops. **And remember**, it is often the accessories that truly make the outfit- a long belt or sash with a pouch to hold personal items may be all you need to really bring a medieval outfit together.

## 6.2 Preparing a Costume

Some medieval merchants were a little wealthier than others but they **did not** have the wealth that nobility would have. Even if they did amass significant wealth, **sumptuary laws** often prevented certain classes of people from buying or wearing certain fabrics, goods or clothing styles. **Clothing was an indicator of your social class in the Middle Ages**, and wearing clothing that was outside your social class could see you locked in the stocks! It would also be impractical- merchants were part of the working class, meaning clothing had to be functional and comfortable for the type of labour you would be doing. This section will cover some tips and hints to help you get yourself and your staff looking like your best Medieval selves! If you are interested in a breakdown of different styles across the Middle Ages, please see *Appendix 2.0 Clothing* at the end of this document.

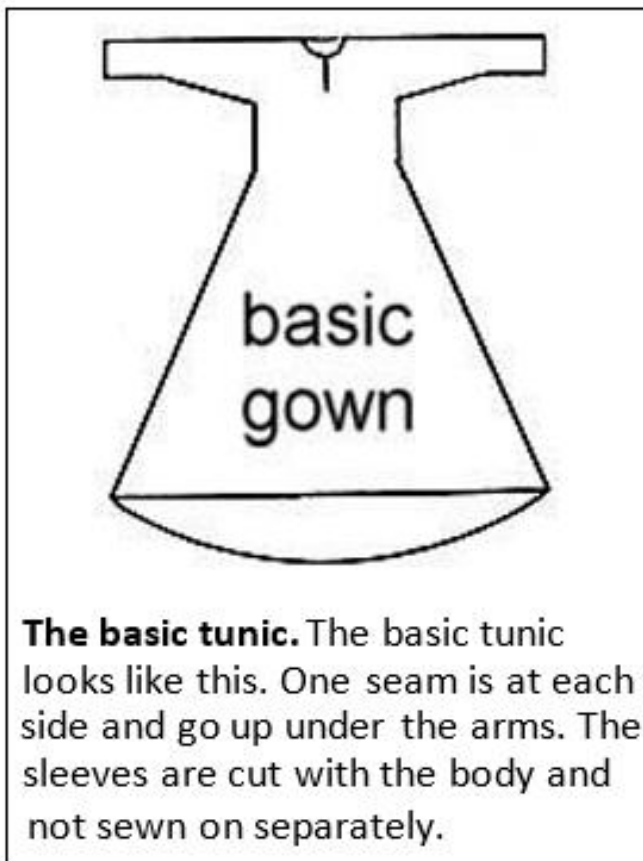
### 6.2.1 Making a Basic Costume

**The basic medieval gown is a “T-Tunic”** shaped like the letter T. Neck holes have a variety of shapes, but the **keyhole shape** shown in the diagram for a basic gown below is common. It’s easy to make your own: men’s tunics can be short or long; ladies tunics are typically ankle-length and may include an apron to cover the lower half of their dress. Typically, the shortest Medieval tunics come down to at least the upper to mid-thigh but may extend down to the knee or mid-calf for some outerwear in some periods. If you are making your own, remember to consider that **the length will shorten a little bit when you sinch it with a belt**. Belts typically had a long tail hanging down the front, called a long belt.

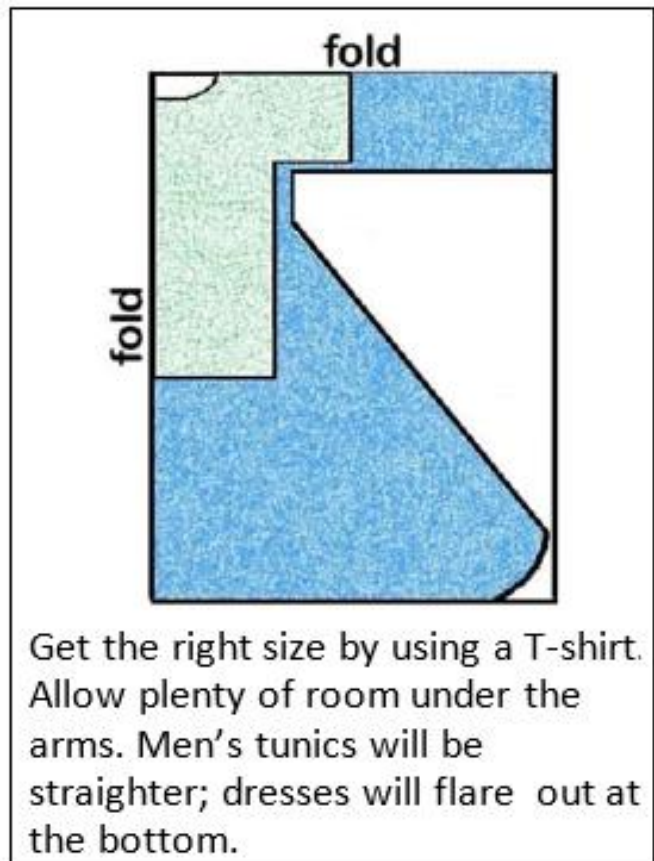
Keep in mind that fabric is expensive - flowing clothing with lots of fabric was a sign of wealth and may be impractical for a working-class person (e.g. a train can be a trip hazard). **Pockets hadn’t been invented yet**, in part because of the extra fabric and labour needed to add them to garments, so a pouch on a belt or a shoulder bag is the best way to store personal belongings. Medieval people also wore more underwear than we do today- this preserved outer layers of clothing from getting too smelly, so they could be worn for multiple days. Because of this, if you want to wear the same clothing over the whole Festival, consider making or buying a couple of under-tunics or wearing a basic low-neck under shirt. This will also help on those chilly July mornings.

Lastly, consider the colours and fabrics you are using for your costume- the requirements for what colours would or wouldn’t be used are covered in *4.3 Colour Schemes*. **The same colour schemes will apply to clothing**, but in general natural and rustic colours are most common- **avoid royal blue, all shades of purple, and pink** (unless you are a very wealthy Viking!). **Aim to use natural fibres** for costumes- synthetic materials might be passable, but you will likely get very hot and uncomfortable. Typically, **wool** and **linen** were the most common materials used and are the most accurate. **Cotton is an accepted alternative** for costuming despite not being historically accurate to this period in Europe and the Middle East.

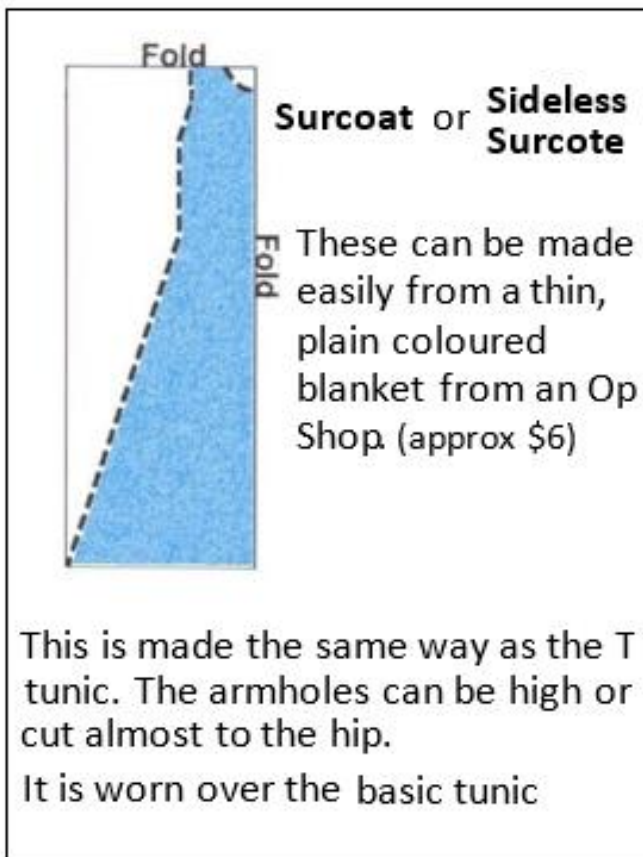
An example of some basic, simple patterns:



**The basic tunic.** The basic tunic looks like this. One seam is at each side and go up under the arms. The sleeves are cut with the body and not sewn on separately.



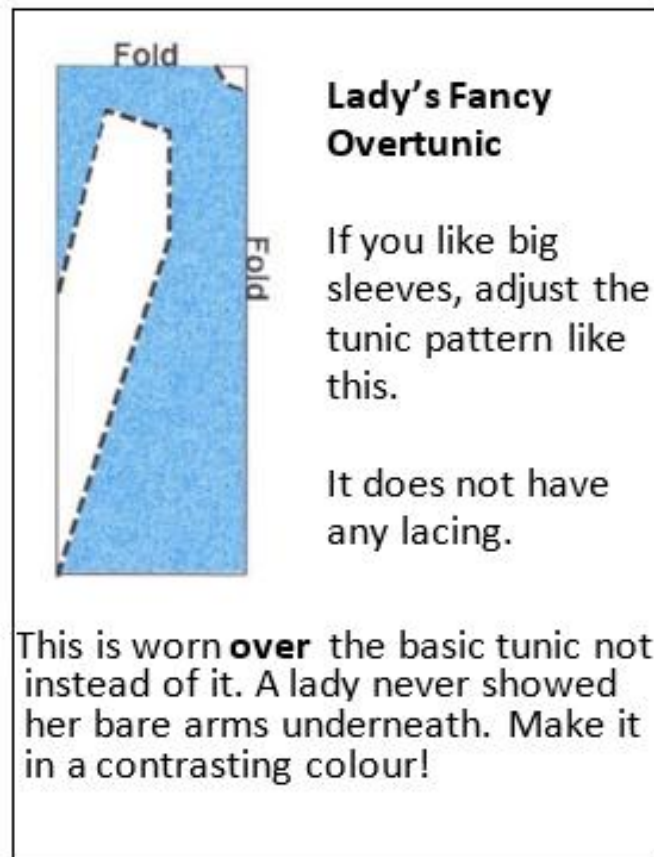
Get the right size by using a T-shirt. Allow plenty of room under the arms. Men's tunics will be straighter; dresses will flare out at the bottom.



**Surcoat or Sideless Surcote**

These can be made easily from a thin, plain coloured blanket from an Op Shop. (approx \$6)

This is made the same way as the T tunic. The armholes can be high or cut almost to the hip. It is worn over the basic tunic



**Lady's Fancy Overtunic**

If you like big sleeves, adjust the tunic pattern like this.

It does not have any lacing.

This is worn **over** the basic tunic not instead of it. A lady never showed her bare arms underneath. Make it in a contrasting colour!

## 6.2.2 Inappropriate Clothing Items

### Some **inappropriate** clothing items:

- Wristwatches
- Mobile phones, pagers, tablets and laptops
- Non-prescription sunglasses
- Bum bags
- Scrunchies and modern hair clips
- Runners, sandals or sneakers\*
- All plastics
- Jeans
- T-shirts or singlets unless as under-clothing
- Button down collared shirts
- Flip-flops
- Hoodies, puffer jackets and jumpers (for warmth, try a cloak or plain blanket thrown over your outfit)
- Obvious, modern stretch fabrics
- Tie dye
- Printed logos
- Colours such as royal blue, all purples, pink, lime green or neons
- Baseball caps and snapbacks
- Board shorts (loose boxer-like shorts called braes were sometimes used as undergarments)
- Corsets on the outside of clothing
- Visibly zippered or Velcroed clothing
- Coloured nail polish
- Velvet, especially crushed velvet

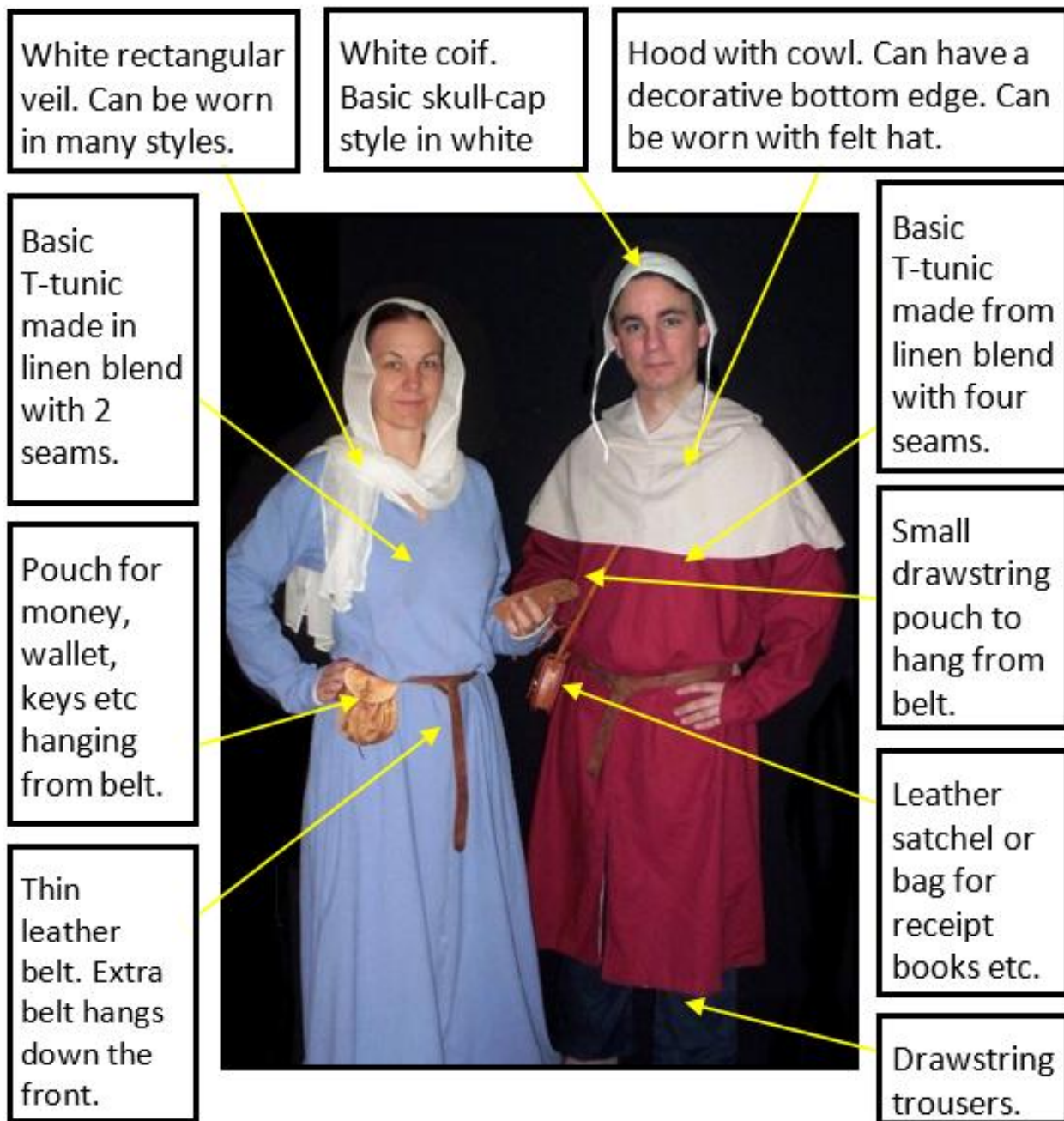
### Some **acceptable anachronisms\*\***:

- Medical equipment
- Prescribed aids
- Accessibility aids
- Mobility aids
- Gloves and aprons for food preparation

\* Modern footwear may be acceptable for accessibility- please discuss this with the Stallholder Coordinator prior to the event. If they are required, it is preferable to wear plain, unpatterned shoes, particularly in black.

\*\* The Abbey Medieval Festival is committed to being an inclusive and accessible event. This is not an exhaustive list, but if you have aids or equipment that help you fully participate in the Festival that are not explicitly listed here and you are unsure if they are allowed, please feel free to ask.

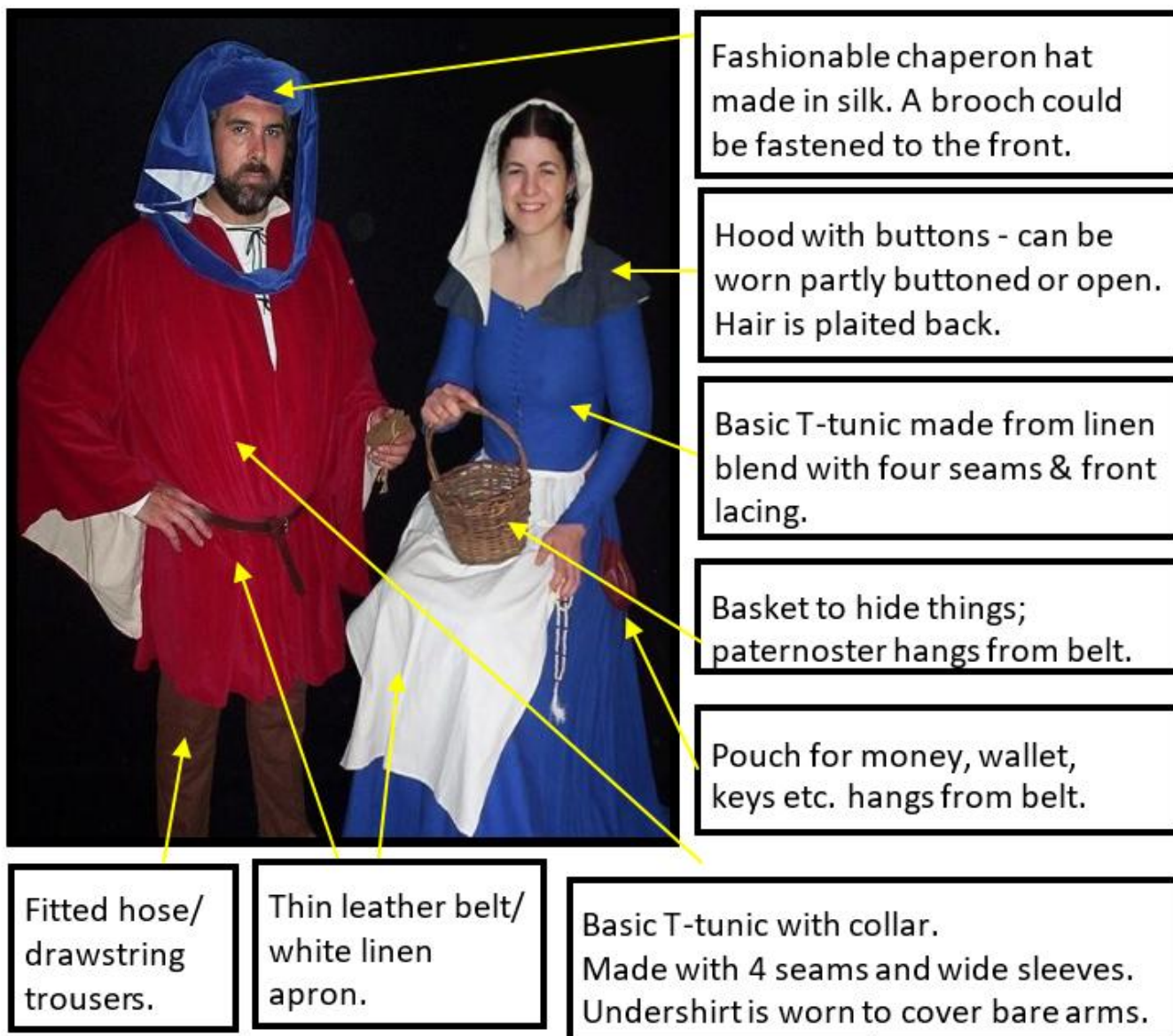
### 6.2.3 Basic Merchant Clothing Example



#### The finishing touches

- A long white apron
- A coif or skullcap
- A hood or floppy felt hat for men
- A sideless surcote is often worn over the basic dress.
- A leather or linen pouch hanging from your belt will provide a secure place for your money, keys etc.,

## 6.2.4 Advanced Merchant Clothing Example



### The finishing touches

- Plain suede slippers make reasonable shoes.
- A paternoster or rosary was widely worn by regular people.
- Rings were popular. Necklaces & bracelets were not.
- Pilgrim badges were very popular for both women and men.
- Laced dresses can be made following the basic T tunic pattern adding a seam at the front and back.

## 7.0 Your Goods

Think for a minute of that Medieval marketplace. Would you find your goods there? Was it invented then? Is it plastic? Fairy wings may sell well, but they weren't sold in the Middle Ages.

### A small sample of appropriate goods include:

- Ceramics, clay goods
- Wooden toys, swords, shields, hobby horses
- Wooden ware– boxes, plates, goblets etc.
- Pewter & silverware
- Jewellery - brooches, necklaces, rings
- Produce of all kinds– breads, cheeses, some fruits
- Leather goods– belts, shoes, bags, pouches\*
- Herbal goods, floral wreaths & decorations.
- Clothing. Be aware of what is appropriate.
- Bone and horn goods– combs, sewing goods\*
- Felt hats in medieval styles
- Wines, ciders and ales
- Illuminations, paintings and drawings
- Religious icons, images, and jewellery
- Heraldic items of most kinds
- Rugs and woven throws
- Beeswax or handmade candles
- Chess, Backgammon, 9 Men's Morris



*This dress is **not** medieval. The fabric and style are incorrect.*

### Not appropriate goods include:





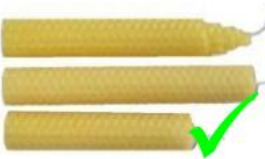















- Fairies, witches, elves, wizards, wands
- Modern/Disney & pop-culture characters
- Frogs, Indians and Buddha statues
- Plastic goods
- Tie dye and batik
- Crushed velvet clothing
- Skeletons & demons
- Oriental daggers & fantasy swords
- Many dragon goods are not appropriate

*\*Leather and bone goods should be made from animals that were known in Europe or the Middle East, including sheep, pig, goat and cow. Kangaroo leather can be used but should not be openly advertised as such on signage. If patrons ask or if you want to verbally offer them that information, that is acceptable*

## **Adapt your current goods!**

For example, if you usually sell brocaded or velvet clothing in a style that is non-Medieval, consider selling material straight from the roll. If you are unsure, feel free to email and ask.

## 7.1 Examples of Acceptable and Unacceptable Items

 <p>Small wooden boxes like this were popular.</p>	 <p>Symbols of the occult were avoided.</p>	 <p>Felt hats in plain colours were worn by men.</p>	 <p>Unusual designs were not worn.</p>
 <p>Beeswax or tallow candles were needed.</p>	 <p>Fancy colours and shapes did not exist.</p>	 <p>Crosses like this were popular.</p>	 <p>Dragon jewellery is not suitable.</p>
 <p>Candlesticks of pewter or brass were used.</p>	 <p>Decorative candle holders were not used.</p>	 <p>Weapons need to be accurate.</p>	 <p>Fantasy swords are not suitable.</p>
 <p>Heraldry was extremely popular.</p>	 <p>Natural themes were not popular.</p>	<p>Paintings &amp; art must be carefully chosen to fit the historical nature of a medieval tournament.</p>   <p>Fantasy art is to be avoided at all costs.</p>	
 <p>Toys reflected grown-up occupations.</p>	 <p>There were no fantasy toys and models.</p>	 <p>Costumes need to be believable.</p>	 <p>There were no fairy costumes, tulle or shiny fabrics.</p>

## 8.0 Putting it all Together: Examples of Stalls

Let's see some examples of stalls and how likely they would be to be approved based on their stall. Please be aware that while stall dressing and costuming is a large factor in approval, there are other constraints such as available space, but the more effort you put into your stall and costume, the more you stand out from other applicants.

### 8.1 Unacceptable: Would not be Approved as a Stallholder

<p>The goods are not medieval, eg frogs, candles, wands are not suitable.</p>	<p>Shiny white plastic stall cover easily identifies as modern. Metal posts are visible.</p>	<p>The stallholder is not dressed suitably, eg jeans, t-shirt &amp; sneakers.</p>	<p>Modern items are being worn, eg. hat, sunglasses etc.</p>	
<p>Fantasy dresses are hanging on plastic display models.</p>				
<p>Glittery star table cloth is not suitable.</p>				
<p>Modern table legs clearly visible.</p>				
<p>Goods are displayed in modern &amp; plastic container</p>				<p>Goods have modern themes &amp; characters, eg kids plastic backpack</p>

#### Comments:

This stall is not suited to a medieval market. Little effort has been made to meet the minimum requirements of dress and presentation. Most of the goods for sale are not suitable and too modern. The fantasy element is too strong and there is too much that screams '21<sup>st</sup> century'!!

## 8.2 Room to Improve: Unlikely to be Approved as a Stallholder



### Comments:

This stallholder is off to an encouraging start upgrading their stall. Some medieval elements are apparent in both presentation and dress, but there are many small ways to improve the overall look.

## 8.3 Almost There: Likely to be Approved as a Stallholder

Greatly improved! This stall looks nice with many improvements, but a few small things are apparent.

Basic T-tunic with long belt and pouch looks great! The floral wreath still needs a veil to go with it.

Note: The fluoro signs have been removed!

A canvas or cotton stall cover in plain colours is needed. An 'A' frame stall would be better.

Wooden display stand looks great & is appropriate.

Sunglasses hooked onto clothes really detracts from the authentic look.

Goods displayed in baskets look great. Lunchbox replaced with mug & bowl.

Long tablecloth in plain white is good. The trestle table legs are wooden.

Items displayed on a goat skin at front of the stall looks good. The big baskets display goods & look good.

Boxes behind the table are for storage & covered with wool blanket.

Plastic bags hidden in basket at back under cloth. Good!

Folding wooden chair with cushion is great. A wooden chest also would be good.



### Comments:

This stallholder has made a significant effort to eliminate modern elements from her stall. Presentation and costuming are simpler, but better than most.

## 8.4 Nailed It: Would be Approved as a Stallholder



### Comments:

This is an accurate representation of a stall from the Middle Ages. It is a replica of one from a manuscript. The tables have been copied from drawings. The costuming is significantly improved with the addition of a veil.



# Abbey Medieval Festival Stallholder Coordinator

Please send any questions to:

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# APPENDIX

## 1.0 Foods

### 1.1 Vegetables

#### **Some of the vegetables available in Europe and the Middle East during the Middle Ages:**

- Asparagus
- Beans – *broadbeans, fava (most common), haricot etc. Modern green beans are originally from the New World and red kidney beans originate in India and don't appear in Europe until after the medieval era.*
- Brussel Sprouts – *Not surprisingly they were grown in Belgium*
- Cabbage – *very common and popular, often pickled*
- Capers
- Carrot – *While orange carrots were known, they were generally smaller purple, white, yellow or red varieties.*
- Cauliflower
- Celery – *'wild celery' used as a 'pot herb' for flavouring*
- Chard or Silverbeet
- Chickpeas/Garbanzo beans – *More common in the south of Europe*
- Cress
- Cucumber
- Garlic
- Scallion/Shallot
- Leek
- Lettuce
- Mushrooms – *Gathered wild*
- Olives – *Eaten in mainly southern Europe, olive oil was exported across Europe for medical and culinary purposes*
- Onions – *Used extensively*
- Peas – *In or out of pods, one of the most common medieval vegetables as they could easily be preserved by drying*
- Radish
- Spinach
- Turnip

## 1.2 Fruit

### Some of the fruit found in the Middle Ages:

- Apricot
- Apple
- Almond – *Almond ‘milk’; was a common ingredient in many medieval dishes*
- Orange – *Grown in Spain (Valencia oranges) though they were more bitter than modern varieties*
- Blackberry
- Cherry
- Chestnut
- Plum
- Custard Apple
- Dates – *Imported from the Middle East with many other ‘warm’ fruits*
- Figs – *Imported from the Mediterranean*
- Grapes – *Fresh, dried and in wine, they were even grown in southern England*
- Lemons – *Grown in Spain and the Middle East and shipped across Europe*
- Melons – *Some varieties*
- Peach
- Pear
- Pine nuts
- Pomegranate
- Quince
- Walnut
- Strawberry
- Banana- *Present in the Middle East, Limassol and southern Spain prior to 1500* <sup>[1][2]</sup>

## 1.3 Banned Food Items

### Fruit and vegetables that we **do not** accept:

- Maize/Corn- *References to maize growing in Europe start after 1500, and is not widely spread until the 1600s* <sup>[3][4]</sup>
- Avocado- *American plant, brought over as part of the Colombian Exchange*
- Potato- *Earliest records of it being grown in Europe are from the 1560s, the earliest reference to them in literature is 1537* <sup>[5]</sup>
- Tomato- *The first reference to tomatoes in European literature is in a 1544 herbal, and the first reference to its culinary uses was 1608* <sup>[6]</sup>
- Pineapple- *Introduced to India from Brazil in 1550, a rare luxury in Europe until the end of the 1600s when the first one was successfully grown in Meerburg* <sup>[7][8]</sup>
- Capsicum and chilli- *American plants, brought over as part of the Colombian Exchange*
- Pumpkin- *Earliest images of pumpkins growing in Europe appear after the 1500s and first references to them being eaten are 1650s, prior to this Europeans seemed to grow them for their amusing shape* <sup>[9][10]</sup>

### Other foods not accepted:

- All chocolate and chocolate drinks- *The first recorded shipment of cacao to Spain was in 1585, was manufactured and sold in large quantities around the same time, and hot sweet chocolate drinks spread across Europe from the 1660s* <sup>[11][12][13]</sup>
- Ice cream
- Soft drinks and cola
- Fairy floss
- Turkey legs

## 2.0 Clothing

All stallholders are asked to exhibit sensitivity in their choice of dress and mannerisms. The Abbey Museum and the Abbey Medieval Festival does not condone the perpetuation of intolerance or prejudice. Displays of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, or other forms of bigotry in the name of 'historical accuracy' will not be tolerated.

### 2.1 Renaissance: 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> Century (1400-1599)

The transition from medieval to modernity. The church's tight control over what was appropriate was beginning to loosen and classical influences returned.

#### Masculine

- Menswear became overall slimmer fitting in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Shirts/shifts were basic linen with high necklines, worn underneath everything else.
- Doublets were worn over top of the base shirt. They only reached the hips and had a centre front closure of buttons or lacing. They were not made of very thick/stiff material – think of it as a waistcoat.
- Early doublets had high necklines and sleeves, billowy around the upper arm then tighter fit around the forearm.
- From around 1500 doublets being open at the front to show the shirt beneath was acceptable as men's fashion became even slimmer fitting.
- Surcoats were a sleeveless garment that could be worn over the doublet in the 1400s. With a longer hem, it can provide more coverage around the groin. They were left open at the sides and pulled in with a belt at the waist.
- Jerkins were worn as either an added jacket layer or instead of doublets in the late 1500s. Still form-fitting, they could be sleeveless and could have decoration around the neck, shoulders and waist.
- Hose were close fitting leggings and could have matching or differently coloured legs.
- Prior to the 1460s-1470s, hose were separate legs that had to be long enough to each be tied to the bottom of the doublet.
- As men's shirt hemlines got shorter, they would begin connecting at the back and lacing together at the front, sometimes with the addition of a codpiece to cover the front of the groin.
- The 1500s saw hose rising higher than the hips closer to the waist, much more like the trousers we recognise today.

## Feminine

- A pinafore style dress without an obvious closure (buttons, big zips, sliding ring hardware, etc) worn over an unbuttoned flowy white blouse with the collar tucked under to be invisible with a gathered skirt and apron over the top would suit this era. A simple vertical trim along the front centre of the pinafore bodice and a ribbon tied around each shoulder strap would be easy additions.
- Bodices were fitted in a more cylindrical than curved way.
- Kirtles provided bust support (corsets were not around yet) and were worn on top of the shift/under gown.
- This era of kirtle was a low neckline by itself, cut fairly straight across at the front and in V shapes at the back with tank top style straps that sleeves could be tied onto. Kirtles often had attached skirts.
- The fronts of bodices on kirtles closed either with metal buttons or lacing – lacing often did not pull the pieces entirely together, leaving a somewhat open space between the edges where the lacing crossed over and the under shirt could be seen.
- Note this era used **spiral lacing** (shown on left). A single lace pulled through alternating sides of the eyelets then tied in a slipknot to keep it in place, the excess end length tucked away
- Skirts were free flowing, usually pleated or gathered, and could go from below the knee to the ankle.
- Gathered skirts were common in English styles and could be worn with bum rolls (pads of stuffed material tied around the waist like a backwards apron underneath the clothing to give volume to skirts).
- Sleeves could be separate pieces, tied on near the shoulder, to be swapped out to change up a dress. They could be slim fitting but not tight, or billowy from the shoulder down to wrist. They can match the dress colour but do not have to.
- For sun protection (and modesty), **partlets** were worn over the shoulders/around the neck. They could have a standing collar or frill decoration. Mostly white, but black was also acceptable.

### An easy modern stand-in could be:

- A wide scarf made of thin fabric.
- A blouse without a standard business collar and no buttons visible above the kirtle.

## Hair

- Men could be clean-shaven, especially younger men, but it wasn't uncommon to have neatly groomed facial hair.
- Hair can be almost any length but longer styles had to have a centre part. Long bowl cuts that could be shorter at the front (much like a mullet) appear in many paintings. They could have short straight cut fringes or be entirely off the face.
- Women also usually wore centre parts, otherwise hair was brushed entirely back with no clear part into plaits or braids that were pinned to the back of the head in a sort of circular crown shape, decorated with plain coloured ribbons or covered.

## Makeup

- Beauty routines were largely about keeping the skin smooth. Washing the face with exfoliators like ground almonds and oats was the most accessible way for working class people to mimic the pale porcelain ideals of the upper class.
- The working class would NOT have had access to, or been able to afford the ingredients for, the pale makeup that became synonymous with the aristocracy in the 1500s, however they may have had blush and lip tints in shades of matte red.

## Accessories

- It was important to protect yourself from the sun with hats and coverings because sunscreen was not around.
- Short pillar hats (cylindrical hats with either a narrow brim or no brim and flat across the top) and larger head wraps were common for men. Berets are also an option.
- Bycoket hats (or Robin Hood hats) were worn by all classes and genders, as were hoods which could end at the neck or have attached short cloaks. For working class people these had to be plain. Straw hats were less fashion items and more necessity for working outside.
- Many women covered their hair with caps or veils even if they were also wearing a hat or hood simply for the practicality of keeping it out of their way.
- Women wore aprons tied around the waist that acted like another skirt layer in daily lives.

## Shoes

- Flat and on the closer fitting side, not chunky looking. Working people wore rounded toe shoes.
- Slouchy boots in either a leather or suede finish, low top closed shoes, even flat Mary Janes, in brown, black or red will do fine.

## 2.2 Late Medieval: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> Century (~1300 – 1599)

This section will focus more on the earlier part of this era, to avoid repetition with Renaissance.

### Clothing

- People covered up a lot more – to protect them from the cold, the sun, the rain, as well as to maintain respectable reputations.
- Red, blues, and browns are very safe colours.
- Decoration was around the edges of garments, if any at all.
- Men’s hemlines were longer in the first half of the era and got shorter in the 1500s.
- Dresses could go from the lower calf to the ground, but ankle length is the longest practical option.
- If your clothing is fitted, it should only be to your natural waistline then fall freely from there.
- Necklines were rounded and could be quite wide, some reaching the ball of the shoulder.
- Sleeves were straight cut but not overly tight.
- Hose were worn by all people. They might be removed for particularly hot or physically intensive work but were part of everyday life (they were the only things covering men’s legs) - any tall socks without obvious patterns.
- If you want to wear tights or leggings instead, they should be long, a solid colour other than black, and not be sheer.

### Hair

- Men’s hair wasn’t strictly one length, but longer hair was parted in the centre, otherwise it was all pushed back except for short, straight cut fringes. It was generally left loose under hats but could all be tucked away under a hood.
- Women’s **hair was always kept up, usually covered as well.**
- Braids pinned up to your head in a milk maid style or low buns are ideal if you have long hair.
- This “get ready with me medieval style” video by Morgan Donner starts with an easy hair tutorial – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGQcc\\_kHe0s&t=637s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGQcc_kHe0s&t=637s)

### Accessories

- Belts could be worn lower around the hip, and are good for hanging a cloth or leather bag from.
- You could also use a simple brooch (annular styles were very common for many centuries) to hike an overskirt hem up around a belt.
- Bycoket hats (or **Robin Hood hats**) were worn by all genders usually for outdoor activities, particularly hunting and falconry, and made it into the rising merchant class in the later half of

the era. They would have been **plain and undecorated**, as sumptuary laws restricted what feathers and furs could be used as decoration.

- Plain straw hats for outdoor work.
- Veils and caps were incredibly common head coverings for women, especially once they were older and/or married.
- Hoods with short capes can be worn by anyone, act as sun protection or layering for the cold, shield from the rain and are easily made out of cut apart hoodies with the drawstrings removed (described further in High Medieval Accessories).

## 2.3 High Medieval: 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> Century (~1000 – 1299)

### Clothing

- Generally earth-toned colours but can be bright.
- Different colours for base layers and outer layers was common – a longer underdress/tunic with fitted sleeves paired with a shorter gown/tunic with shorter or wider sleeves on top.
- High necklines, either rounded or with a slight V cut into the front.
- Long fitted but not tight sleeves. If you have ‘bell sleeves’, there should be a fitted long sleeve underneath it.
- There was only minor differences between gendered clothing. Dresses began fitting closer to the body in the 1100s but the loose gender-neutral styles of the previous era were still very common.
- A dress should fall freely from the waist, shirts should fall from the shoulders.
- Mid-calf to ankle length skirt hems, knee length shirt hems.
- Clothing decoration is bands of contrasting colour, woven/braided trims, NOT shiny.
- Shoes were very flat with no heels and always worn with tights/hose/tall socks.

### Hair

- Depictions of men commonly sport a centre-parted pageboy style of hair and are more likely to have facial hair than not.
- Women’s hair was parted in the centre and generally kept in one or two plaits/braids. This could be left to hang freely or could be pinned up to be out of the way entirely. Elastic hair ties did not exist, so try wrapping visible hair ties with string or plain, non-shiny ribbon.

## Accessories

- Men wore straw hats or cloth caps/coifs to keep off the sun and rain, very practical items and not necessary for everyday unless you worked outside.
- A good additional layer for everyone was a **short cape with a hood** attached – these capes only covered the shoulders and chest.
- An easy way to make one is to take a plain coloured hoodie from an op shop, remove the drawstrings and cut the body off at the shoulder point in either a curved/circular shape, or coming down to a squared v in the centre of the chest and back.
- Coifs, veils and hair nets/snoods were all common items for women. Christianity was now well established so covering the hair was extremely common (however, there are examples of women without hair coverings, but they appear to be of the upper classes).
- There is early evidence of women wearing belts in the 1200s. If you wear one, it should be thin and quite plain. This could have been a way for the working class to reflect the growing trend towards figure-fitting dress bodices without sacrificing practicality or having to completely alter their existing clothes.

## 2.4 Early Medieval: Late 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> Century (~ 450 – 999)

The earlier in time you go, the simpler the clothing was and the less differences between gendered clothing there were

### Clothing

- Evolving from the Roman rectangular silhouette, this period saw European styles shift into being more triangular – wider at the bottom and narrower at the top.
- Tunics and gowns should fall freely from the chest.
- Tunics and dresses are the same base garment cut to different lengths.
- While it is likely that women wore longer dresses, it is also possible that they were shorter – maybe knee-length, similar to men’s tunics.
- This may have been because fabric was narrower prior to industrial weaving looms, and far more expensive, so a working-class person could save money by using less fabric.
- Sleeves would have been cut as part of the body panels when making clothing in the 400s-500s, but tailored clothing was making advancements by the second half of the era which is when we begin seeing sleeves sewn onto garments rather than being part of the body.

## Styling

- Men could have facial hair or be shaved, examples of both exist in illuminations, and most men appear to have had shorter hair.
- The spread of Christianity meant that women were required to be modest and covered, but simplistic. Early iteration of veils that were left to hang plainly (which would eventually evolve into the many styles of wraps seen in the later middle ages).
- Women probably did not wear belts at this point.
- Brooches and pins would have remained popular as a remnant of Romanisation and to keep looser clothing like cloaks and aprons in place.

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