

Everyday Life in Tudor Times

The Tudor period, which lasted from 1485 to 1603, was a fascinating but challenging time to be alive. Society was divided clearly between the rich and the poor, and this affected almost every part of daily life.

Most ordinary Tudor people were peasants or craftsmen who worked long hours for little reward. Their homes were modest structures built with wattle and daub walls and thatched roofs. A typical cottage had a single main room where the family cooked, ate and slept together, sharing the space with animals during winter months.

Diet varied enormously depending on wealth. The poor relied on pottage, dark bread and seasonal vegetables. The wealthy dined lavishly on roasted meats, game birds, exotic spices and sweet desserts called subtleties, often made from sugar.

Education was limited and unequal. Wealthy boys attended grammar schools or had private tutors, while girls from noble families might receive lessons at home. Most children from poorer families received no formal education at all.

Despite the hardships, Tudor people enjoyed a rich social life. Popular pastimes included watching plays at travelling theatres, attending fairs, and playing early versions of football. Music was central to daily life, and even ordinary people sang and played instruments.

Questions

1. When did the Tudor period begin and end?
2. What did most ordinary Tudor people do for work?
3. What materials were used to build Tudor cottages?
4. Describe what a typical Tudor cottage was like inside.
5. What did poor Tudor people usually eat?
6. What were subtleties?
7. How were wealthy boys educated?
8. What education did most poor children receive?
9. Name two pastimes that Tudor people enjoyed.
10. What does the way Tudor people spent their free time tell us about what was important to them?



Text C Quiz



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