

Life in a medieval castle



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Life during the middle ages began at sunrise, when one of the guards sounded the day's start. Servants had already begun to make sure that the fires were lit in the kitchen and great hall. Breakfast was not served until mid day. During this time the servants got time to complete their chores while the soups were cooking in the kitchen. All floors had to be cleaned and wash buckets, which were called basins, had to be washed out. Once the lord and the lady of the house woke up, the maids entered into their quarters, and they cleaned and emptied chamber pots, washed the basins, and the laundry woman also began to do the day's laundry. The lord and the lady got well dressed before leaving their quarters to go to mass. They always wore elegant clothing which showed their status but also kept them very warm. After a small breakfast was eaten and the lord and his family went to mass. Once the morning service was complete, the lord dealt with the day's business. At mid-morning, dinner was served. Dinner was the main meal of the day. During dinner there was usually entertainment and much food. When dinner was finished, the lord may take his knights or special guests hunting while the lady may do embroidering. Usually the lady did not because she oversaw the castle and did not have time. Supper which was different from dinner, was usually eaten right before bedtime. It marked the end of the day for everyone in the castle. After supper the lord and the lady would go to their quarters and the servants would retire to their quarters. This was the almost daily routine of life in a castle. However, life in a castle was not all work. Hunting and hawking were greatly enjoyed by everyone in the castle and when the lord hunted, delicious and sometimes rare animals were brought to the table as food. Some of the past times were quite dangerous. These involved tournaments and rough ball, which was similar to

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football. Adults and children alike, enjoyed games such as the blind man's bluff. This game involved tying a player's head with a blind fold, and he would chase the other players. To pass time indoors, people played board games and listened to musicians or storytellers. Storytellers would narrate the stories of heroes such as Arthur and his knights. Though life in the middle ages involved a lot of work, the people in the castle enjoyed great entertainment.

In a castle, almost everyone had a specific responsibility. The lord was the head of the castle. The lady spent much of her time supervising their work, as well as overseeing the cooking of meals in the kitchen. One of her responsibilities was running the household, managing production, and maintaining adequate supplies. She had to know which rents and fees were owed to the household. The lady also supervised the embroiderers who had the responsibility of making the clothes for the people in the castle and keeping the lady company. In addition, the ladies were responsible for overseeing the education of the young pages. The parents of the children usually devoted little time to them and those children were quickly thrust in to the adult world. Children usually became part adults at age 12 and were allowed to bear arms. Aristocratic children usually had very little contact with their parents. They were usually raised by nurses. The boys had to perform various services for the lord of the castle such as protect the arms and care for his horses. When the boy reached majority, which was usually at age 15, the father's rule over him came to an end and the boy was considered an adult with full rights. At that point, the boy was a free, responsible individual who set up their own household. Girls were responsible to learn how to run a

household and to raise children when they were old enough. These kinds of responsibilities allowed a castle life to run more smoothly.

Castles in the medieval times were very uncomfortable and hardships were plenty. A castle had no central heating. The main fireplace heat was saved for the lord and the lady. They were fortunate to have heavy blankets, mattresses made of feathers, fur covers, while the workers had to sleep in the towers which got unbearably cold and damp, especially at night time. The attendants were sometimes lucky to stay with their master or mistress. They slept on the floor but they were able to get some of the heat coming out of the fireplace. When it was summer, everyone enjoyed the warm weather outside because the castle was still cold inside. Workers wrapped themselves in covers which helped them stay warm during cold times. The castle was also a very busy place. Sheep and pigs would roam freely around the castle. With the loud noise of all the people in the castle, it caused a busy atmosphere with a loud noise. Hygiene was normal for the people in the middle ages. They took baths, washed their hands, and brushed their teeth. However, disposal of human waste was not as good. Most castles did not have any plumbing which meant that the waste would remain in one place until it was cleaned by the chamber maids. These conditions may seem bad but they were better than the conditions of a lower class citizen.

The code of chivalry and courtly love had a significant influence on the life of nobles. The code of chivalry affected knights in particular. The code of Chivalry came to mean an idealization of the life and manners of a knight at home in his castle and with his court. Courtly love also had strict rules. It was practiced all over Europe. The rules of courtly love allowed nobles to show

how they really felt for each other. This kind of event was common between nobles and ladies.

The harshness of the castles made them less than desirable to live in but for the lord and lady it was better than the common people's homes. The life of individuals involved hard work life for the average person during the Middle Ages was very routine but they enjoyed entertainment as well. Everyone in the castle had a specific responsibility which made life run more efficiently even though a castle was busy and very loud. The code of chivalry and courtly love also were a great part of life. They dictated how a noble should lead their lives and how to hold themselves when with others. This was life in the middle ages.

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