

New Merchant Costume Guidelines

WELCOME TO ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND!

When you enter the gates of our Renaissance Faire, the world of 16th century England awaits. It is the "Golden Age," the English Renaissance, the time of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth Tudor, who reigned from 1558 to 1603.

To escape the heat and stench of London in the summer, the Queen would often travel to the countryside and visit various towns and the estates of her nobility. Most of her court would travel with her, many of those in her government, and others looking for favor from the Queen. Add a full complement of servants for each high-born traveler and the numbers would often swell into the hundreds. At each stop, the hosting noble or town official would be expected to welcome the Queen with much pomp and circumstance, producing elaborate presentations, plays, masques and the like, for the Queen's enjoyment.

It is one of these "progresses" that brings Queen Elizabeth to the Renaissance Faire. We do not portray a particular year for the Queen's visit, but roughly the period from the 1560's until just before the Spanish Armada in 1588. We are "a chapter, not a page" out of Elizabethan history.

Bristol is a bustling town, with a full spectrum of townsfolk from the Lord Mayor, to Shopkeepers, farmers, actors, the clergy, street vendors (mongers), and the gentry class who owned the surrounding lands.



THE QUEEN IS COMING! No other event in your life is more important - no birth, no wedding, no death, no business deal can outshine this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see Her Majesty with your own eyes! At the time, seeing the Queen was like meeting the Pope or the President in person. The Queen's arrival also means many visitors to the city (the Faire) with extra money to spend, (which means profit for the merchants). What do you wear for such an event? Why, your "Sunday best," of course! Just as you would adorn your shop or your home for this festive occasion, so should you dress for the occasion as well!

How you dress identifies your "class." The main classes were: the noble class (those holding a title, either hereditary or honorary), the middle class (merchants, lawyers, other "professionals"), and the peasant class (known today as the "working poor"). At the Faire, your station in life will be known mainly by your clothing. For example, a merchant is in the middle class so he and his family will dress according to that station. Food sellers, on the other hand, are part of the peasant class. Entertainers may be either, depending on how they are cast. These guidelines have been prepared to make your day at the Faire more successful.

ELIZABETH TUDOR, 1558-1603

The accession to the throne of England of a monarch possessing a strong individuality has always resulted in that particular peculiarity being stamped upon the nation, and Elizabeth decidedly established herself as one such individual. Her force of will, her strong business qualities, her intense love of pleasure, her passion for display, her love and encouragement of everything that added to the greatness of England, are all marked upon the progress of the nation during her reign, and especially upon costume. It was not to be expected that a woman of her force of character would be content with the same garments her grandmother affected, and consequently at an early period in her reign we find those changes inaugurated which resulted in a complete upheaval and entire revolution of the dress of the English nation.

A LETTER FROM THE FAIRE COSTUMER

Dear Merchants of the Bristol Renaissance Faire!

Hail and well met to all! Following are the guidelines for costuming at our faire, but first a few notes about costuming in general here at Bristol. **Please make sure to read these guidelines in full as some things may have changed, and all Merchant participants, new or old, will be required to follow these guidelines.**

Costuming here at Bristol is my personal passion, and I truly hope that it is or will become so, even in part, for many of you as well. Your costume is not just the garb you wear, but it is so much more than that! Your costume is the clothing of the persona you take on for the entirety of the faire-day; it is the first thing a patron sees when they meet you, even before you open your mouth to speak. How you look is part of the adornment of your shop, part of the draw of your wares, and part of the overall look of our faire as a whole! Here at Bristol we create a magical world for our patrons, and your costume and your appearance is essential to keeping that magic alive, the magic that keeps our patrons at faire from gate-open until gate-close, and ready to come back for more!

There are many groups of participants here at Bristol, and each one of them has a something different to bring to our patrons. Please understand that though there is an overall Elizabethan look to our Faire, there are different guidelines set for each individual group of Participants. We



want to make sure as our Patrons enjoy our Faire that their experiences stay fresh and new as they encounter each group and what they have to offer. Think of it as the NFL with each team wearing a different uniform, making the experience of each team unique! With this please try to concern yourselves only with the costumes and needs of those in your personal purview. Alternative costuming, such as the styles listed in these guidelines, must have special permission, even if used in the past, so make sure you get permission before depending on wearing them at faire!

My role as costumer here is to make sure that the look of each person at the faire aids in the beauty and entertainment of the whole. These guidelines have been put in place to achieve this goal and I ask everyone to help me by being diligent in following them in order to create the best experience for our Patrons! I also understand, and will consider personal needs on a case-by-case basis, but I need everyone to be aware that many of my costume requests will not be up for discussion. Costuming is a required part of working at our faire, whether in your shop or on the fairway, but it is something to be enjoyed and something to take pride in! I strive to treat all Participants at our Faire equally, and appreciate all advice and ideas addressed to me. I promise I will be working to the best of my ability with everyone, and will be out of faire site throughout the season monitoring and helping fix problems as I feel necessary. Be patient and have faith that my goal in helping to make our Faire enjoyable through costuming will always be my main concern!

So where do you go from here? How do you begin you costume of continue from the costuming you have so far? Remember that you are not just dressing in garb at faire, but you are dressing in the clothing of the person you represent! Take pride and have fun with what you wear. Class was everything to the Elizabethans, and they would dress the best for their class, especially if the Queen was coming! No one would want to be mistaken for a class lower than their own, and laws kept them from dressing higher than their class. Most merchants were middle class, so most shop owners and their families should strive for that level, with some employees being of a lower class. Remember to dress for your wears! If you are selling something more upscale, such as jewelry, you may want to dress toward the upper class. Personalize and have fun with your costume! Elizabethan costumes have a few basic parts, but what colors, decoration and simple styling you chose really makes your look complete. Never forget though that this is something that you must keep on all day so make sure it is comfortable; only chose heavier fabrics and very tight fitting bodices if you think you can make it all day in them, they are a choice, not a requirement of your costume! Lastly think of the look of everyone in your shop as a whole, how everyone looks together in your shop when they walk in, and you can really make an impact on the patrons!

Creating your costume and the costuming look for your shop is an exciting experience, and taking pride in your look will only help you to thrive at our faire. Remember that I am always here to help all Participants at our faire the best that I can and thank you all for all your hard work and devotion in continuing to make Bristol one of the best dressed Renaissance Faires!

-Alyssa Bolden
Bristol Renaissance Faire Costumer

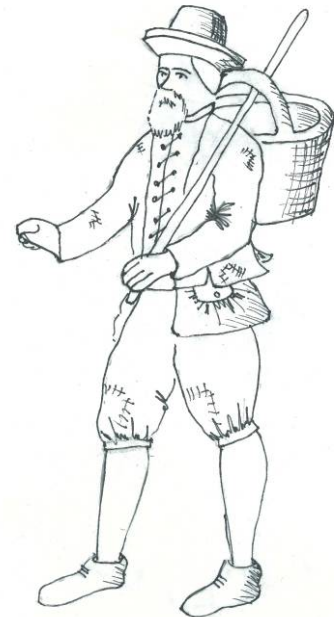
COSTUME GUIDELINES

To assure proper costuming please make sure that everyone in your shop has access to these guidelines.

Elizabethan society was very class based; there was some, but very little mobility between classes. At faire, your station in life will be known mainly by your clothing. For example, a merchant selling pottery or other such wares may be middle class, so he and his family will dress according to that station. Food sellers, on the other hand may be part of the peasant class. You should learn not only the costume of your own class but the costumes of all the classes so you recognize another person's status and know how to properly interact with them. A sumptuary tax was used to keep the classes dressing to their station. You had to pay a tax to dress in finer things, ensuring that one could tell your station at a glance and know how to treat you. Though many did pay the tax to out dress their station this can become confusing in a faire setting, so stick to your class ideas if you can. We like to give our patrons the best view of the distinct class structure present during Elizabeth's reign. Though you may want to dress upper class, most importantly of all, **no one should ever out dress the Queen!**

MEN'S FASHIONS - PEASANT CLASS

A peasant man would wear a long-sleeved shirt/shift/chemise and breeches (short pants) of some kind. Over this he would also wear a laced-up or buttoned jerkin/doublet (a vest-like garment with or without sleeves). On his head some kind of hat such as a flat cap (small flat beret-like hat) or muffin cap (a small gathered fabric hat that looks a lot like the top of a muffin), often with a small skullcap called a biggins/coif underneath to keep his hair out of his eyes (these can also be great for hot days because they can be soaked in cold water!). All but the poorest would have stockings/hose (tall socks) and shoes, or if he wore no hose, he would have long breeches similar to pajama pants, cross gartered from ankle to knee (wrapped at the bottom, sort of like a ballet slipper wraps up the leg). A pouch would be worn on a belt (very good for carrying non-period items out of sight!), along with other objects pertaining to his profession. He would not wear much jewelry if any at all as it was far too expensive. He would have a cape or simple cloak for cold weather.



Fabrics were coarsely woven, or at least had that appearance. The lower classes mostly spun their own yarn and wove their own cloth, but that does not mean that they were good at it! They wore wool, linen and combinations of the two fibers, twill, duck, trigger, and other weaves of simple natural fibers. At the time cotton was a very luxurious fabric and linen very common; in modern times the opposite is true. Using a good cotton to make parts of your costume is perfectly acceptable and should not read as too luxurious. A good linen will always make a lovely, and more historically accurate piece. They also wore leather and fur when

they could get it from hunting, but not too much as it was harder to get a hold of. Avoid silk, satin, velvet, taffeta double-knit, camouflage, rip-stop, blue jean, print fabrics (period looking woven patterns are okay), lame and other non-period looking fabrics. Avoid Lace as it was all hand made at the time and far too expensive. If you think it may not look period you are probably right! Also you want to avoid 100 polyester or other non-natural fibers, not only because they look wrong, but because they do not tend to breath well and can be very uncomfortable in hot weather.

Colors for dyeing the fabrics were obtained from vegetable sources and were mainly earth colors and muted tones. Colors should be unmatching but coordinated as they did not have much fabric at a time. Avoid aqua, fuchsia, neons, teal, turquoise, bright pink, excessive black and Purple. Trim on peasant clothes was kept simple, and usually embroidery or plain strips of contrasting fabric was sewn to edges to set them off. More often, there was no trim or edge decoration at all. Closures may have been bone, wood, nut, and other natural buttons, hooks and eyes, and lacings. Their clothing would most likely have been well worn with holes or patches on it as they probably only owned one set!

MEN'S FASHIONS - MIDDLE CLASS

The middle class men would quite often be gentry or petty nobility, with his own horse and lands. He might also be a high-ranking servant in a nobleman's household, a rich merchant or highly skilled craftsman of some kind, therefore the middle class man would dress quite well, if he could afford it.



His basic pieces of clothing were like the peasant class, only much finer. His shirt/shift/chemise might have a small ruffle at the neck and at the wrists, emulating the larger ruffs of the upper class. Over the shirt, he wore a close-fitting doublet (vest-like garment) with sleeves that were separate pieces that tied or buttoned in. The doublet would often be the centerpiece of his outfit, commonly decorated with short skirting, tabs, slashes and other details and embellishments. He wore breeches or slops, also called truck-hose or upper-stocks on his lower half (short pants varying from full “pumpkin” shaped to closer fitting) and they were also often decorated to some degree. His hosen now reached all the way up his legs like tights. Many of the older or more conservative men wore knee-length coats called surcoates/schaubes worn over doublets and slops as an outer garment, instead of a cape. The surcoate resembled a modern choir robe with a deep collar of velvet or fur. He wore either a flat cap or a tall crowned, small brimmed hat with feathers and a fancy hatband, and his belt, pouch/purse and shoes would be of nice quality. His hair was short and older men and conservative types covered their heads with a coif or biggins under their hats. Men of this class were likely to go

clean shaven, or if they had whiskers, they were well trimmed. He would have a fine cape or cloak for cooler weather.

Fabrics were still the practical wool and linen (or cotton), but they were much finer quality than before. Added to this were silk, satins, and velvets, small-wale (stripe) corduroys brocades fur and leather in modest quantities. Colors should be brighter and more intense, but still from mostly from vegetable dyes. Indigo was a cheaper and more common color. Dark colors were more formal and black was worn for the most formal occasions (as true black was a hard color to achieve). As class rose colors became more intense and jewel tones were more prevalent. Avoid bright pink, fuchsia, neons, print fabrics (period looking woven patterns are okay), excesses of turquoise, silver or gold, and absolutely no purple. Trims were more ornate versions of the simple colored bands of trim such as ribbon and rows of embroidery often in geometric shapes, but were still restricted. Lace and metallics were almost exclusively for the higher class. Closures included metal buttons, covered buttons, rope buttons, frogs, hooks & eyes, ivory buttons, pearl buttons, scrimshaw buttons and lacing. A fine gold chain may have been worn around the neck to denote wealth, rank or position. As class raised the state of clothing became more kept and cleaner, and a person would own more than one set. Clothes were trimmed, embroidered, and jeweled as much as he could afford and the sumptuary laws would allow. Though it was not unheard of for many to push or just pay the sumptuary laws to dress above their station, again we prefer to stick to the standards for classes

MEN'S FASHIONS - UPPER CLASS

The upper class men were the wealthiest and most powerful of gentleman with servants to dress them. Clothing was most often matching outfits of very fine fabrics, highly ornate and bejeweled to attract the Queen's attentions

An upper class man would wear the same items of clothing as the middle class, but of much finer and more ornate quality. He wore a shift/shirt/chemise made of fine material, often with small lace edged neck/wrist ruffs/ruffles. His breeches were short and finely tailored/fitted, ornately decorated coming in a variety of shapes as with the middle class. His doublet was also highly tailored/fitted to his body and much more decorated. Decoration was used to make his shoulders look wider (epaulets, wings, padded rolls, tabs, etc) and skirt tabs or skirting became more elaborate. Doublets usually pointed at the center front and often matched or coordinated with his breeches. He would sometimes wear a second sleeveless layer over the first doublet; sometimes this was called a jerkin, but other times called a doublet as well. His doublet sleeves were elaborately decorated and though they did not always match his



doublet they coordinated with the outfit. His hose were long like tights and of a high quality; his shoes were more elaborate with decorative buckles/rosettes. He, like most noble men, often wore a decorative cape, very highly embellished and often fur lined. He would have a longer capes or cloak worn for warmth. Surcoates/schaubes were also worn by the older/more conservative and were of nice quality.

He would have more accessories than the lower classes, many of which helped to show off his wealth and high stature. On his belt was worn an ornate pouch along with other accessories necessary for his lifestyle (A sword/dagger were often worn, but these are restricted on faire site, so do not plan on wearing them). A dandy, or a more eccentric gentleman, would have such things as a feather fan, scented gloves and a pomander on his belt. He might wear elaborate garter ties used to hold up his hose at the knees that were highly decorative with buckles and gold/silver embroidery. His hat may be a flat hat or tall hat and was much more elaborate with a highly decorated hatband, embellishments and beautiful feather plumes. His hair would have been very well kept and facial hair, if any, combed and pomaded. He may have worn one of the



most Elizabethan of accessories: the ruff. Ruffs were bands of pleated or ruffled fabric that ranged from tiny ruffles at the neck and wrists attached to the chemise/shirt to a separate piece six inch wide, cartridge pleated and starched with a wire support worn around the neck (wrist ruffs were never that big). A lovingly starched and pleated ruff, made from fine linen/lace was truly a sign of his stature. His jewelry may have included one pearl drop earring, rings, gold chains, jeweled broaches and buttons. Shiny, sparkly jewelry was very fashionable.

The highest class would be very well kept and groomed and they would own many garments of high quality. Fabrics used would include glorious velvets, silk, brocades, damasks, fine wool, linen, leather, fur and cotton (cotton would have been considered a very noble fabric, but will not read as much so to a modern eye. Fine linen would read as more luxurious). Colors would be brilliant (not loud) made with finer dyes, though they were still a mix of mineral, vegetable and other natural dyes. Jewel tones and dark colors for the more formal; black was still worn for the most formal occasions. (A note about black: Though black was the most formal of colors and the arrival of the Queen is a formal occasion, we try to make sure not too many people are wearing all black. A faire where all nobles/upper class wore black would give the wrong message to a modern audience!) Avoid bright pink fuchsia, neons, print fabrics (period looking woven patterns are okay), excesses of turquoise, silver or gold, and absolutely no purple. The upper class used trim and elaboration on almost every garment they could; gold and silver trims and embroideries, Blackwork embroidery on the shirt, embroidery on edges, beading, pearling and bejeweling fabrics were all used almost to excess. Accessories and other small fabric pieces were often heavily decorated with bright silk and metallic threads of precious metals along with other trimmings. Closures were the same as middle class but of fancier materials. Everything was of as fine of materials, and elaborately decorated as a man could afford, but again, rule number one was always: no out-dressing the Queen!

WOMEN'S FASHIONS - PEASANT CLASS

A peasant woman wore a long-sleeved shift/shirt/chemise under everything and at least two ankle-floor length skirts over that, with the upper skirt, usually newer than the underskirt, tucked up out of the dirt. Skirts must be long, remember showing your ankles was scandalous! She often had an apron on over the skirts to keep them clean if she was doing work (which was most of the time). She wore a simple, tight fitting bodice or vest with shoulder straps, a scoop or square necklines that sat above the bust (no undercut bodices!) which usually came to at least a slight point in front, and laced or buttoned on over the shift (bodices could range from very tight to just well-fitted, depending on the wearer). It usually had removable sleeves which were worn or not, depending on the weather. She also wore knee-length hosen/stockings/tall socks sometimes held up by garter ties and had some kind of simple shoes. Any woman over the age of thirteen had her hair covered by some sort of headgear, such as a biggins/coif, garland, flatcap, wide straw hat or muffin cap, and the hair itself was usually braided or bundled up out of the way. There was no such thing as having short hair "for comfort." (If you have short hair you need to cover your head or wear a hairpiece. Full wigs are not recommended as they can be very hot). She would wear a belt with a pouch like a man would, and would often hang objects pertaining to her profession off of it. She would often also have a basket to carry things gathered in the fields or bought at morning market. She would not wear much for jewelry, if any at all as it was for to expensive and extravagant. In cold weather she would have a cape or shawl wrapped around her.



Fabrics were coarsely woven, or at least had that appearance. The lower classes mostly spun their own yarn and wove their own cloth, but that does not mean that they were good at it! They wore wool, linen and combinations of the two fibers, twill, duck, trigger, and other weaves of simple natural fibers. At the time cotton was a very luxurious fabric and linen very common; in modern times the opposite is true. Using a good cotton to make parts of your costume is perfectly acceptable and should not read as too luxurious. A good linen will always make a lovely and more historically accurate piece. They also wore leather and fur when they could get it from hunting, but not too much as it was harder to get a hold of. Avoid silk, satin, velvet, taffeta double-knit, camouflage, rip-stop, blue jean, print fabrics (period looking woven patterns are okay), lame and other non-period looking fabrics. Avoid Lace as it was all hand made at the time and far too expensive. If you think it may not look period you are probably right! Also you want to avoid 100 polyester or other non-natural fibers, not only because they look wrong, but because they do not tend to breath well and can be very uncomfortable in hot weather.

Colors for dying the fabrics were obtained from vegetable sources and were mainly earth colors and muted tones. Colors should be unmatching but coordinated as they did not have much fabric at a time. Avoid aqua, fuchsia, neons, teal, turquoise, bright pink, excessive black and Purple.

Trim on peasant clothes was kept simple, and usually embroidery or plain strips of contrasting fabric was sewn to edges to set them off. More often, there was no trim or edge decoration at all. Closures may have been bone, wood, nut, and other natural buttons, hooks and eyes, and lacings. Their clothing would most likely have been well worn with holes or patches on it as they probably only owned one set!

WOMEN'S FASHIONS - MIDDLE CLASS

Ladies of this class were wives or daughters of knights, country squires, well-off merchants or artisans, sometimes with their own servants. Or they might be high ranking servants in a noble household with a lot of authority and power of their own. Wives and daughters were under the control of their male relatives, having few rights. Like their male equivalents, they dressed as well as they could afford.

The middle class lady's chemise was almost always high-necked and made out of some delicate fabric such as nice cotton or fine linen. It might be embroidered and have small neck and wrist ruffs, which were lace-edged, budget permitting. A married lady or conservative spinster wore



her chemise closed down the front and a single lady wore hers open (In the coldest weather, everybody probably closed their chemises). Over the chemise she wore at least a bumroll (small pad worn over the hips in the back), a very nice bodice with sleeves and two fine, full, long skirts, the top skirt often split to show the underskirt. If she were on the more fashionable side of middle class she wore a corset, bum-roll or farthingale (a cone shaped hoopskirt), sometime with petticoats, just like the noble ladies but in a less exaggerated style. Her corset was less tight, maybe her bum-roll was smaller, and her farthingale was less wide around the

hem. Her underskirt, richly decorated, was cut to fit closely over the farthingale, so the effect was that of a stiff A-line, long skirt. The bodice was sometimes high-necked, with a tall collar, or cut in a square neckline (always cut above the bust, never undercut, and always with shoulder straps). The overskirt was full and pleated or gathered into the waistband. The bodice and overskirt matched. The overskirt was often split up the front to display the fancy underskirt, or forepart (often only a small triangle of the underskirt, called the forepart, was elaborately decorated as it was the only part seen, and the rest of the underskirt was left plain). Her lace-in sleeves sometimes matched the more ornate underskirt. Her hair was dressed to imitate the styles of the Court ladies and she wore headdresses and hats such as French hoods (crescent shaped hats) tallhats, pillbox hats and other styles, just as they did. She might have hosen (tall socks/tights) with pretty ribbon garters and quality shoes. She would also have a belt or girdle (a more decorative belt, often of chain or fine woven material) and pouch/purse, with accessories relating to her profession and lifestyle. She sometimes wore an open Spanish Surcoate (a sort of long jacket-like garment) as an extra layer of clothing over her gown, and she would have a quality cape, shawl or cloak for the cold.

Fabrics were still the practical wool and linen (or cotton), but they were much finer quality than before. Added to this were silk, satins, and velvets, small-wale (stripe) corduroys brocades fur and leather in modest quantities. Colors should be brighter and more intense, but still from mostly from vegetable dyes. Indigo was a cheaper and more common color. Dark colors were more formal and black was worn for the most formal occasions (as true black was a hard color to achieve). As class rose colors became more intense and jewel tones were more prevalent. Avoid bright pink, fuchsia, neons, print fabrics (period looking woven patterns are okay), excesses of turquoise, silver or gold, and absolutely no purple. She had embroidery or other trim decorating the garment edges, and they might also be beaded or jeweled if she were rich enough. Trims were more ornate versions of the simple colored bands of trim such as ribbon and rows of embroidery often in geometric shapes, but were still restricted. Her hat or cap, pouch/purse, and shoes could also be decorated like the rest. Lace and metallics were almost exclusively for the higher class, but if she could afford a little she would. Closures included metal buttons, covered buttons, rope buttons, frogs, hooks & eyes, ivory buttons, pearl buttons, scrimshaw buttons and lacing. Depending on her pretensions, she might also have a fine feather fan or pomander. She wore whatever jewelry she could afford and the sumptuary laws would allow. Jewelry would include gold and silver chains, strings of glass beads, semi-precious stones, or small pearls. She may have worn rings, brooches, earrings and pins as well. Makeup should be minimal, but the fashion was for pale skin, pink cheeks, thin eyebrows, red lips and dark, expressive eyes. As class raised the state of clothing became more kept and cleaner, and a person would own more than one set. Clothes were trimmed, embroidered, and jeweled as much as he could afford and the sumptuary laws would allow. Though it was not unheard of for many to push or just pay the sumptuary laws to dress above their station, again we prefer to stick to the standards for classes



WOMEN'S FASHIONS - UPPER CLASS

Upper class women were ladies of rank and distinction, often administering their estates in their husband's absence. With the Queen in power ladies of the court became more respectable and powerful. These women would have had servants to help dress them, so their clothing could be more complex and elaborate.

An upper class lady would wear a fine chemise, often lightweight and almost gauzelike with small lace edged neck/wrist ruffs. Her chemise would often be embroidered or even sewn with pearls, and the same customs of married/unmarried chemise wear as the middle class applied. She would always wear a corset, tightly laced and heavily boned; giving the body a smooth shape and pushing up the bust. Her farthingale and bumroll would be larger and made with finer materials, increasing the lines of her period silhouette. She would often wear petticoats on top of the farthingale; Women had to make sure that their ankles would not show under the farthingale,

and their hoops would not show through their skirts (I would recommend not wearing many petticoats under your farthingale, if any at all, due to the heat, but if you find your hoops are showing through your skirts one can be worn over them). Her overskirt and underskirt were worn like the finer middle class wear, with the underskirt fitting tightly over the farthingale and the overskirt much fuller, pleated or gathered into a waistband and often split to show the forepart (decorated front part of the underskirt). Her skirts should be much more elaborate and decorative; especially the forepart, and her bodice and sleeves would be more fitted and very elaborately decorated. There were three common necklines used for bodice; the square (English), Square with a slight curve above the bust (French), and the high necked and collared women's doublet (all styles were always cut above the bust, never undercut, and always with shoulder straps). Often with masculine/military influenced decoration. Her outfit was matched and highly coordinated; the bodice and overskirt often matched, as did the sleeves and underskirt/forepart, but there were many combinations used. Spanish Surcoats were like the middle class, but more tailored and of finer materials, and she would have a fine cape, cloak or shawl, usually fur trimmed for the cold.

As with upper class men, her accessories would be of fine quality. Her belt/girdle would be much fancier and hung with a ladies' accessories (such as a pomander, fan, mirror, small purse, handkerchief, scented gloves, needlecase, etc). She would still have a basket, but it was usually carried by her servants if available. Wearing of ruffs, bands of pleated or ruffled fabric that ranged from tiny ruffles at the neck and wrists attached to the chemise/shirt to a separate piece six inch wide, cartridge pleated and starched with a wire support worn around the neck (wrist ruffs were never that big) were a very popular style. She would wear fine hosen (tights/tall socks) held up with fancy garters and high quality slippers/shoes decorated with rosettes/buckles (heeled shoes were used, but these are not at all recommended for faire use). Her hat would be even more lavish; flat cap, French hood, tallhat, and headdresses were used. High court ladies sometimes wore a pearl edged gauzy veil over a decorative diadem (jeweled circlet that sat around the head). Hair styles varied from pinned up, braided or curly to long and



straight and brushed/pinned up over pads of hair called rats. Hair was always worn up by a proper lady, and makeup should be minimal, the period style being pale skin, pink cheeks, thin eyebrows, red lips and dark, expressive eyes. Her jewelry would be elaborate as women often showed off their wealth with jewelry. Gold chains, bracelets, necklaces, rings, pendant or drop earrings, strands of pearls, jeweled buttons, jeweled girdles (belts), metal tips for the points of lacing were all used. Shiny, sparkly jewelry was very fashionable

The highest class would be very well kept and groomed and they would own many garments of high quality. Fabrics used would include glorious velvets, silk, brocades, damasks, fine wool, linen, leather, fur and cotton (cotton would have been considered a very noble fabric, but will not

read as much so to a modern eye. Fine linen would read as more luxurious). Colors would be brilliant (not loud) made with finer dyes, though they were still a mix of mineral, vegetable and other natural dyes. Jewel tones and dark colors for the more formal; black was still worn for the most formal occasions. (A note about black: Though black was the most formal of colors and the arrival of the Queen is a formal occasion, we try to make sure not too many people are wearing all black. A faire where all nobles/upper class wore black would give the wrong message to a modern audience!) Avoid bright pink fuchsia, neons, print fabrics (period looking woven patterns are okay), excesses of turquoise, silver or gold, and absolutely no purple. The upper class used trim and elaboration on almost every garment they could; gold and silver trims and embroideries, Blackwork embroidery on the chemise, embroidery on edges, beading, pearling and bejeweling fabrics were all used almost to excess. Accessories and other small fabric pieces were often heavily decorated with bright silk and metallic threads of precious metals along with other trimmings. Closures were the same as middle class but of fancier materials. Everything was of as fine of materials, and elaborately decorated as a lady could afford, but again, rule number one was always: no out-dressing the Queen!

CHILDREN'S FASHIONS

Elizabethan children's clothing was in general exactly like adult clothing with swaddling and simple dresses for very young boys and girls. If you are bringing your children to faire make sure to consider costuming (including footwear) for them as well if they are going to be in your shop and out on fair site, but keep it simple, durable and washable!

NOTES ON THESE GUIDELINES

Personalization:

Personalization is probably one of the most key parts of creating your costume. When assembling or tweaking the parts of your costume make sure to keep this in mind. You want your costume to look in your shop, so consider this when you chose colors, fabrics and shapes to use. Choose your class with care as well and remember to dress for what you sell. Beyond this though is room to really create personality with your clothing! From color and texture of fabric, to details like embroidery and trim, chose what you think is right for the persona you are displaying, and people will want to approach you and find out about you....and what you are selling! For example if you were a fruit salesman you would want to play with bright colors that would match your fruit. Perhaps you are lower class, but your clothing and apron has patches embroidered with fruit shapes and fun colors. These should be small simple touches that just add interest and liveliness to your costume, and make creating and wearing it much more enjoyable!

A special note on shoes:

One of the most important parts of your costume will be your footwear so consider it carefully. There are various styles of shoes, many available on site. Make sure when you are buying shoes



for the faire that you are getting something that will be comfortable and safe for faire use, but looks somewhat period. Though heels and slippers were used we do not recommend them for faire use. **No open toed shoes or sandals are allowed for fair participants and no sneakers!** Leather earth shoes, boots, kung-fu/tai-chi or mary-jane type cloth shoes are some good styles. If wearing moccasins or tall moccasin-like boots, they must not exhibit fringe. The main difference for middle and upper class shoes was use of finer materials, larger proportions and more decoration as class rose.

Costuming outside your shop:

The same guidelines for costuming as listed here apply whether you are inside our outside your shop on the faireway (costumes are not required backstage, just when in site of patrons). You represent the faire and add to the faire's ambiance while on the faireway, and we thank you for looking your best there too! You may want to bring a cloak/cape/shawl with you for outside as we do tend to have rain and cooler weather. Hats are also something you will need for the faireway as they help protect you from the rain and the sun, and were required by law during Elizabethan times (required by law and taxed by the queen....go figure)

Resources:

Our most recommended resource for costuming at Bristol is the book *Elizabethan Costuming for the Years 1550-1580*. This book was written specifically with renaissance faire costuming in mind and takes a more in-depth look at proper costuming as well as costume construction. I highly recommend this book for anyone involved in renaissance faires!

Other Resources:

Arnold, Janet. *Patterns of Fashion, Number 3 (1560-1620)*

Ashdown, Mrs. Charles H. *British Costume During 19 Centuries*

Barton, Lucy. *History of Costume for the Stage*

Gorsline, Douglas. *What People Wore*

Holkeboer, Katherine Strand. *Patterns for Theatrical Costume*

Kohler, Carl. *The History of Costume* (excellent source for period costume of all kinds)

Wagh, Nora. *Corsets and Crinolines*

Wagh, Nora. *The Cut of Men's Clothes*

Wagh, Nora. *The Cut of Women's Clothes*

Wagh, Nora. *Early American Costume* (See section under Elizabethan Costume)

Winters, Janet. *Elizabethan Costuming for the Years 1550-1580*

Construction Tips:

Hamilton/Hill. *The Evolution of Fashion*

Hunnisett, Jean. *Period Costume for Stage and Screen - Patterns for Women's Dress 1500-1800*

Ladbury, Ann. *The Dressmaker's Dictionary*

Fabric Information

Fairchild's *Dictionary of Textiles*

Wingate, Isabel B. *Textile Fabrics and Their Selection*



ALTERNATIVE STYLE COSTUMING

There are many alternative styles of costuming also used on faire site, and though we love the variety this gives to the look of the faire, these types of costuming are limited to special permission only. If you are interested in using costuming alternative to the guidelines above please make sure to apply to do so during our preseason. This includes product lines; if you would like to wear alternative costume styles that you sell you must also get permission to do so, and it is not guaranteed you will be able to. Remember not to depend on having permission for alternative costuming until you have had it approved by faire; make sure to have a back up plan for your costume! **Even if you have used alternative costuming styles in the past you must get permission every year to do so again.** Alternative costuming will be approved on a case by case basis depending on faire location, product line, character and prominence of the style on faire site. Remember that participants committed to fully developing their character/persona are much more likely to receive permission for alternative costuming!

Alternative styles are any non-standard Elizabethan style costuming. Some restricted alternative styles are (but not limited to):

- Middle Eastern Styles (including any use of half-bodices)
- Kilts/Scottish/Celtic Styles
- Fantasy Costuming (including wings, feather garlands, sparkly fabrics, etc)
- Pirate/Privateer
- Steampunk
- Barbarian Costuming
- Armor/Chainmail
- Cross-Dressing
- All-Black Costumes

ABSOLUTE NO'S

Here at Bristol there are some things that are absolute NO'S as far as costuming goes. Please make sure to review this list to make sure you are not planning on any of these things being part of your costume.

Costume items not approved at Bristol:

- Undercut bodices, waist cinchers or bodices cut too low or worn too tight to be appropriate. Remember we are a family show!
- Strapless bodices (any bodice without straps would have been considered a corset, which is underclothing of the time)
- Tights worn without pants (no tights with just a codpiece)
- Shirtless men
- Tank tops/camisoles or other modern shirts under bodices
- Bodices worn without a chemise
- Sneakers

- Open-toed shoes
- Purple (reserved for the queen only)
- Tie-dye, neon, camouflage, glittery/sparkly and other completely non-period patterns and colors
- Printed fabric (fabric printing was not common at the time so patterns must be woven into the fabrics and make sure the patterns are period, not modern looking)
- Blue jean, lame, nylon, and other completely non-period fabrics
- Regular/modern clothing or other period clothing (such as Victorian/18th century)
- Hair colored in non-natural colors (such a neon pink, green, purple)
- Highly stylized or fantasy makeup
- Nail Polish
- Uncovered tattoos/piercings
- Watches, sunglasses, cell phones and other modern items worn in plain site (keep them out of site in your pouch please!)

SAFTY ISSUES

There are some issues with safety and costuming here at Bristol. Make sure to review the following closely to make sure you are costumed safely at faire!

Pregnancy:

Women who are pregnant should not wear, and are not permitted to wear tightly laced bodices at any stage of pregnancy. Half-bodices that sit above the stomach and more vest-like loose bodices are fine to wear for all pregnant women. Please just let the faire know you will need this special costume approval and if you need any advice about what to wear while pregnant!



Open-Toed Shoes:

Open-Toed shoes and sandals are never allowed on faire site. There are far too many dangers and rough terrain. Because this is such an important safety issue you will be asked to change shoes immediately if you are wearing open-toed shoes. Shoes with high-heels are also not recommended due to our rough terrain.

Tight-Lacing

Anyone who has ever worn a bodice or corset knows that it is a very unique experience for someone used to wearing more modern clothing. Many people may be under the impression that having a very tightly laced bodice or corset is a requirement of faire clothing, but this is not necessarily true, how tight of a bodice you wear is a matter of personal choice, and lacing yourself to tightly to function for our long days and high temperatures is not recommended. Bodices should not be incredibly loose, but should be fitted to the body and you should be able to breathe easily and be able to move around. One thing that people don't realize is that fitting is a large issue, if you can not get one style of bodice to fit properly, you may want to try other

styles and cuts until you find one that fits properly, or have one fitted to your personal shape. However, if you enjoy having a more tightly laced bodice that is your personal choice, but make sure it stays appropriate as we are a family show!

Heat

Please see our handout on costume guidelines for high temperature days

MYTHS, TRUTHS AND FALSEHOODS

There are a lot of ideas out there about Bristol costuming, many of them correct, and many of them not. Addressed here are some of the myths truths and falsehoods about costuming heard around faire site and our official policies about them.

Can a costume be grandfathered in? False

Just because you have worn a costume or costume style in the past does not automatically mean you will be able to wear it again. Please see the section about alternative costume styles



Do some groups of people have different costume rules? True

Some groups do have different rules worked out with the faire due to different circumstances such as work environment. These people have worked out different guidelines with special permission, and because of this we ask that you make sure to only concern yourself with yourself and those under your purview.

If I sell something in my shop I can always wear it. False

If you have alternative costume product lines and you would like to wear alternative costume styles that you sell you must get permission from faire to do so, and it is not guaranteed you will be able to. Please see the section about alternative costume styles

If I have a certain amount of people in my shop in proper costuming can I have some not wearing approved faire costumes? False

All participants must wear fair approved costuming unless they have special permission from the faire and the costumer.

There is no rule that you can have a person in alternative costuming without special permission if you have a certain amount of other people in proper costuming.

My children do not have to wear proper costuming, do they? False

Children who are on site on passes have to wear proper costuming, especially if you would like them to be in your shop or march in Parade. Please check the children's costume guidelines section.

If it my day off or I am not currently working in my shop can I wear any kind of costume I would like? False

Any time you use your pass to get onto site you must be in full faire approved costuming (not partial costuming please). You may wear regular/modern clothing if you want to walk around, but you must wear your faire approved costume if you are in your shop or hawking in the streets. If you would like to take a 'patron day' and wear alternative costuming you must purchase a ticket at the box office and come in the main gate.

Should I wear my hat on the faireway? True

Elizabethan law required that everyone wear a hat, but we require you to only wear one out on the faireway. It's also a smart thing to wear as it helps you keep cool, keep the sun off of your head, and makes your costume look complete!

Anyone can march in Parade. False

You must be in proper faire approved costume from head to toe in order to march in parade. Please check the supplement on Parade costuming.

Costuming is too expensive! I can't afford all this! False

Costuming may seem expensive, but with the right research and time spent you can find proper faire costuming with almost any budget. There are a lot of resources out there as well as many beautiful costume pieces that can be found on site. Make sure you have a plan before arriving at Bristol though as you don't want to be caught without proper costuming! Remember full approved costuming is a required part of participating at the faire.



PARADE COSTUME GUIDELINES

Parade is a wonderful event every faire day where the people of Bristol come together to celebrate the arrival of the beautiful Queen Elizabeth and welcome her to our town with a fantastic display of the best of the best of Bristol. Parade is filled with entertainers, courtiers, soldiers, and the various peoples of Bristol, and is also a wonderful opportunity for sign bearers to advertise shops to our patrons! Remember this is a great calibration for the Queen, and a display of the finest Bristol has to offer for our Patrons, so everyone involved must be dressed completely in proper faire approved costumes!

How it works:

In order to march in Parade you must be ready and lined up at least 5 minutes before step-off in order to get your costume approved. If you show up late, or are not in complete costume you will not be able to participate in parade that day. There is a no-tolerance policy of proper faire costuming in parade so if you would like participate please make sure to review you costume guidelines completely, even if you have marched in parade in the past. Again we are looking to display a specific look to our patrons during Parade, so even if you are in a faire-site approved costume it may not be parade-approved and you may not be able to march.

Parade costumes:

Parade costumes should be outstanding examples of faire costuming. They should be well constructed, fitted, well put together visually, and really make a statement for our patrons. Take time with your costume if you would like to march in Parade, and make sure that all the details are right from the hat on your head to the shoes on your feet. Make sure to take pride in what you wear and really make it your own, something special and unique to yourself, something you enjoy wearing, because our patrons will see that!

Things to remember:

Shoes:

Good proper shoes are absolutely necessary to be able to march in parade. Shoes must be closed-toed for safety reasons, and absolutely no modern shoes such as sneakers or hiking boots will be allowed!

Children:

Children love to march in parade, and though we love to have them they must be in proper costume (including shoes) and absolutely must have a guardian with them. If they do not know who the adult with them is they will be asked to leave, so make sure your children know who they are with!

Alternative Costuming:

As for the rest of faire alternative costuming will need special permission in order to be worn in Parade. Only a limit amount of alternative costuming will be allowed in parade so special permission with march with also be needed, even if you have marched in the past.

MEN'S COSTUME GUIDELINE CHECKLIST

This is just a brief checklist to make sure you have your entire required costume on. please see your detailed Merchant Costume Guidelines for a more elaborate description of proper faire costuming

Does your costume include at least the following period-style items?

- Long-sleeved shirt
- Jerkin/Doublet
- Knee length or long pants
- Tights or knee length socks (stockings)
- Hat
- Closed-toed shoes

Has the owner/operator of the shop you work in approved your costume for their shop?

Do you have your items/details of costuming you use to make your outfit uniquely your own?

Are you NOT wearing any of the following?

- Tights worn without pants (no tights with just a codpiece)
- Sneakers, open-toed shoes
- Purple (reserved for the queen only)
- Tie-dye, neon, camouflage or other non-period patterns and colors
- Printed fabric, blue jean, lame, nylon, and other completely non-period fabrics
- Regular/modern clothing or other period clothing
- Hair colored in non-natural colors
- Highly stylized or fantasy makeup, nail polish
- Uncovered tattoos/piercings (only one earring please)
- Watches, sunglasses, cell phones and other modern items worn in plain site (keep them out of site in your pouch please!)



WOMEN'S COSTUME GUIDELINE CHECKLIST

Rendering/example drawing to be added

This is just a brief checklist to make sure you have your entire required costume on. please see your detailed Merchant Costume Guidelines for a more elaborate description of proper faire costuming

Does your costume include at least the following period-style items?

- Long-sleeved chemise
- Bodice with shoulder straps that sits above the bustline
- Two skirts (overskirt and underskirt)
- Tights or knee length socks (stockings)
- Hat
- Closed-toed shoes

Has the owner/operator of the shop you work in approved your costume for their shop?

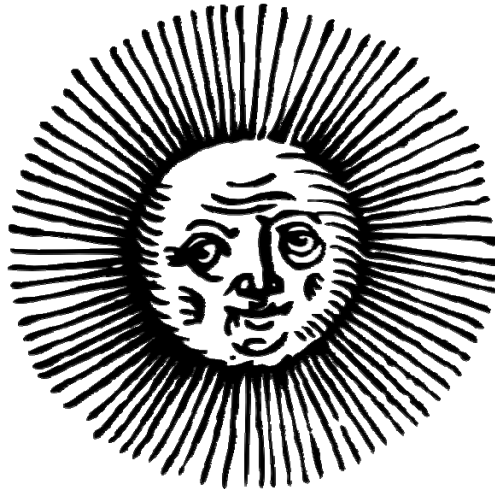
Do you have your items/details of costuming you use to make your outfit uniquely your own?

Are you NOT wearing any of the following?

- Undercut bodices, waist cinchers or bodices cut too low/worn too tight to be appropriate.
- Strapless bodices (bodices without straps are considered a corset, which is underclothing)
- Tank tops/camisoles or other modern shirts under bodices
- Bodices worn without a chemise
- Sneakers, open-toed shoes
- Purple (reserved for the queen only)
- Tie-dye, neon, camouflage or other non-period patterns and colors
- Printed fabric, blue jean, lame, nylon, and other completely non-period fabrics
- Regular/modern clothing or other period clothing
- Hair colored in non-natural colors
- Highly stylized or fantasy makeup, nail polish
- Uncovered tattoos/piercings (only one earring please)
- Watches, sunglasses, cell phones and other modern items worn in plain site (keep them out of site in your pouch please!)



COSTUME GUIDELINES FOR HIGH-HEAT DAYS



These Costume Guidelines are for temperatures over 90 degrees. Please check your weekly newsletters as we will announce when Heat Guidelines are in affect!

For Ladies:

- Chemise sleeves may be rolled up, or short sleeve chemises may be used.
- Chemises may be worn off the shoulder.
- Only one skirt worn instead of the usual two required.
- You may want to lace your bodice a bit looser, but it still needs to be a full bodice that goes above the bust points.
- For the heat it may also be good to keep your hair up off your neck.

For Men:

- You may roll up your shirt/chemise sleeves.
- Doublets or jerkins must still be worn, but may be worn unlaced and open for comfort.
- You may want to consider wearing shorter breeches with tights or stockings.

For everyone:

- Though many believe that hats help you stay cooler, you will not be required to wear them in the Fairway as usual (you are never required to wear them while in your shop).
- Also please think about the breath-ability of the fabrics you are wearing. Natural fibers are best! Just because something synthetic seems thin and lightweight does not mean it is breathable, so see which of your costumes have the best airflow.

Please stay safe and healthy out there and make sure to drink a lot of water!