

Linen Use in Tudor Garments

Description

If you are planning to attend a Tudor era re-enactment, you will want to have the proper costume. Before you search for suitable costumes for your Tudor re-enactment, you need to decide exactly what it is you're looking for, though.

You might start by thinking about linen. It was a very important fabric in the Tudor era.

For women of the Tudor era, underwear consisted of a [linen shift](#), also known as a smock or chemise. Chemises were basically like a petticoat, which went under their dress. Dresses were generally made of wool in those days. So, the linen undergarment protected a woman from the scratchiness of wool, since linen is softer. For men, linen was made into an undershirt and braces. [Hose](#), or stockings, for both sexes were also made of linen, often times.

The softness of linen was used to the advantage of Tudor era men and women in multiple other ways as well. Although most outer clothing was made of wool, most of it was lined with linen. So, it was used for both comfortable and practical reasons.

Another use for linen in the Tudor era was in the making of coifs, or [head coverings](#). They were thought to protect a person from head lice and they were used as a sign of reverence, keeping one's head covered in God's presence.

Another use for a linen coif was to keep a woman's hair hidden. Tudors believed that a woman's hair would make a man more passionate. Married women were expected to keep their hair hidden under a linen coif, except in the presence of their husband. A woman who walked in public without a linen coif was considered to be a hussy.

The Tudors also used linen as a sign of social status. There were different grades of linen. [Finer linen](#) fabric was reserved mainly for richer classes. The better the quality of the linen, the longer it took to make and the more expensive it was. In some ways, that actually worked to the advantage of the poorer folk. Rough, [heavy linen](#) was warmer for doing field work. If you were very rich, in Tudor times, you might have been able to afford cotton or silk, instead. Linen was vital to the lower classes, though.

No matter what class a person belonged to, it was always expected that linen undergarments be kept clean. In its raw form, the linen was an off color. So, it was often bleached. Bleaching linen, in those days, was done by soaking it in urine to whiten it.

Linen fabric was also used for other things, such as [tablecloths](#), in Tudor times. So, it was really an indispensable resource.

When you are preparing for a Tudor re-enactment, be sure to do some research. Decide whether you wish to portray a lower or higher class citizen,

first. You can find the exact linen match for your re-enactment project at www.fabrics-store.com.

CATEGORY

1. LIFE LOVERS

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Date Created

August 20, 2008

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