
Live the Renaissance by Becoming a Volunteer

Description

Sarah's eyes twinkle as she twirls around, showing off her outfit. She is quite fetching in her full blue skirt and black bodice. "ÅI'm an Irish wench,"Å she says with a wink. She places a garland made of flowers on her head. "ÅMaybe someday I'll become a lady-in-waiting, but for now being a wench is a lot of fun."Å

Sarah has been going to the NorCal Renaissance Faire since she was a child. It runs in the family. Her uncle is a musician and also a maker of period instruments. His psalteries, lutes, bodhrans, and dulcimers were always a big hit at the fairs. Her favorite part of the festival as a child was the pirates and belly dancers. "ÅPart of me was also fascinated by the black clad performers in the Danse Macabre,"Å Sarah says with a laugh, "ÅI guess I was a little odd for a kid."Å Now days, her favorite part of the faire is taking her kids and experiencing the magic of the period fresh through their eyes.

The NorCal Faire is located near Gilroy, CA. It is open weekends in September and October. Willingtown, the fictional village the faire recreates, is a bustle of activity. Performers roam the streets and take the stage to the delight of the crowds. For those who don't have a costume the faire has costumes to rent, or you can purchase one from the many vendors. In the afternoon, visitors can bask in the glory of Her Royal Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. Afterwards good food and drink await you as musicians playing everything from English country tunes to Gypsy tribal melodies line the streets and stages. Aerial acrobats, fire eaters, and the jousting knights are just a few of many of the things to see.



Getting involved in the faire is easy. You can just purchase a ticket and join in the fun. If you wish to truly immerse yourself in the faire experience you can volunteer with the faire as well. Volunteers are expected to complete the same training as employees of the faire, which usually consists of a few informal workshops. Guilds people the township with everything from the poor washer woman to the town guards. Guilds actively recruit new members, and are a wonderful way to begin faire participation. Some guilds require a short audition. It can be worthwhile to visit the faire as a guest one year to meet and talk to the different guilds to find one that piques your interest. They will be more than happy to fill you in on the requirements of joining a specific guild.

By getting your costume ready now you will be prepared for any auditions a faire may require. If you want to immerse yourself in a faire, volunteering is wonderful way to get started. You don't have to wait for the NorCal Faire to begin this adventure. In April and May, the North Carolina Renaissance Faire is looking for volunteers. They also have events throughout the year, such as their Celtic Halloween, in which volunteers are needed. The Greater St. Louis Renaissance Faire takes place in May and June every year and depends on volunteers for much of the event.

The span of many of these faires is liberal in scope, ranging from the year 1500 to 1620. While visitors can dress how they wish in an era of their choice, volunteers must stay within the guidelines set by the specific faire. Volunteers aren't limited to renaissance England by any means, as many faires have an international market that boasts many ethnicities and cultural costumes from around the globe dressed in the prescribed time period. Sarah also shares this when it comes to choosing a costume, "Pay attention to weather reports. If it's 100 degrees out, the all wool ensemble may not be the best costume to pick." She advises sticking to natural fibers when possible. Linen is a good choice. Not only does it lend authenticity to a garment, linen is easy to work with and breathable. Linen also comes in many colors and has a wonderful texture.

Now is the time to start preparing if you plan on volunteering. First, contact

the faire you wish to participate in to find out their volunteer and costume requirements. Then, order your linen and any patterns you need to complete your outfit. Finally, attend the required audition or interview. Before you know it, you can become an integral part of the renaissance experience!

CATEGORY

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