



Tips for Looking Your Best in Your Renaissance Garb.

Description

You are going to want to look your best at your next Renaissance faire. Sure, you've got the homemade outfit all ready to go, but remember, every detail counts. This is serious costume time where your polyester, and highly flammable, Halloween costume just won't cut it. Read through these tips carefully so you avoid making any blunders. Don't let anything take away from the historical authenticity of your attire!

Let us start with the discussion of proper fabrics for your Renaissance clothing. This detail is perhaps the most significant because it comprises the majority of your overall look. You will want to stray away from modern fabrics and trims. That means no stretchy or shiny fabrics! Think to yourself, "Could this fabric be used in a disco ensemble?" If your answer is yes, then I suggest you do a little more historical research. Take this same advice if you were considering anything sequined or bedazzled. While appealing, these modern features of fabric definitely do not have any historical connection to the Renaissance.

Here are some fabrics and trims to avoid:

Poly satin

Stretch velvet

Modern polyester lace

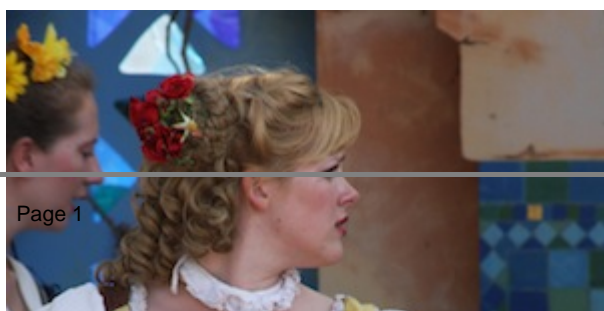
Shiny satin ribbon

Shiny bright gold trim

You will also want to use the appropriate fabric, which means no silk or velvet for peasant garbs (go higher up the social hierarchy if the peasant fashion is too tame for your taste). Plaid is also a tricky thing and deserves special attention to make sure it is not misused.

Linen is the best fabric to use if you want your costume to be as historically accurate as possible. This is the traditional fabric used throughout history and suits all your needs to this day. Besides being historically authentic, linen has many desirable qualities that make it an excellent fabric for your most treasured costumes. Linen is very durable, and you will want your outfit to last after all the hard work you put into it. Also, it gets hot wearing all those layers in the summer! Linen is the perfect material to keep you cool while under the sun at your faire or festival.

Just like any piece of clothing you wear, you want it to fit great. That means making sure your garments fit your body just right. Make the necessary adjustments so you get rid of any gaps in the bodice. The chest area should fit snugly without any wrinkles or sagging. Hems and sleeves should fall at the perfect length and not be too short or too long. And ladies, pay attention to your bust to make sure you have the proper support.



The best way to achieve and understand the correct fit for your time period is to study portraits and images. This is important in order to stay true to the era and style you have chosen. If you want your outfit to look like a real garb rather than a Halloween costume, then avoid mixing styles, time periods, or ethnicities. This is particularly difficult when it comes to mixing fantasy fashion with historical. So as tempting as it is to fasten on those fairy wings and throw on some glitter....try to practice some restraint. Unless you are actually dressing like a woodland nymph- then by all means, pile it on.

Once you've covered the basics, you can examine smaller details. For starters- the trim. You might have gotten the fabric for you garb just right, but all your careful attention to detail will be lost if you mess up with the trim. Keep in mind that noble garb should look...well...*noble*. That means lavish embroidery, beadwork, and couching. Noble clothing is your chance to adorn yourself with luxurious, yet appropriate, embellishments.

Underpinnings really can make the whole line of an outfit wrong if improperly constructed or worn. Articles of clothing, such as corsets or padding, are not only historically correct, but they make your outfit fit properly. You should wear enough petticoats in order to achieve the right fullness of your skirt and sufficiently cover your farthingale (if you choose to wear one). Also, undergarments should be in all white, and preferably linen. Save the colors for your outerwear, not your smock, chemise, petticoat, braies, etc

Although not all periods featured very full skirts, you should make sure you use enough fabric. A common mistake seen at Renaissance fairs are all the skirts made with too little fabric to create a beautifully full ensemble. Keep in mind that you should use more fabric than suggested by most commercial patterns.

Historically speaking, a bodice or doublet is worn with sleeves. To avoid burning up in hot weather, make yours with linen. You can also fasten them on with buttons so they hang on to the back or stay open at the seam.

Hats and head-coverings should always be worn when needed, and they almost always are. Make sure your head-covering matches the style displayed throughout your outfit. Just like the rest of your garment, you will want to be sure you do not use the wrong fabrics. So tuck those gold lame veils away for Halloween!

Have fun with your hairstyle, whether it be with extensions, wigs, or braids. One rule I think you *can* break is avoiding modern hairstyles. Sure, bangs are modern-*ish*, but are they really going to destroy your whole look? I doubt it. Also, get crazy with those extensions. If they had the kind of hair styling capabilities that we have now back in the day, then I'm sure they would have gone all out too! Dressing up should be fun. Look authentic but still have fun with it, after all!

Jewelry is a small detail to take into account, but still try to stay away from modern styles. Accessorize according to the time you are attempting to capture. You will receive plenty of free tokens and SCA favors to wear at festivals, which is fine. Just remember- every little thing you have on you creates your look. This means that every detail can distract or take away from your realism. When you head out the door just ask yourself "Did Lady Elizabeth *really* hold a feathered fan?" Chances are no.

Other accessories to watch out for are wristwatches, hair clips, and sneakers. I think it goes without saying that sneakers will definitely hold your costume back from achieving any type of glory. You can also forget about competing in any costume contests for that matter too. This is the one day you should leave your sunglasses at home too. Save your sneakers and sunglasses for Disneyland, you want to make a good impression at the Renaissance faire.

These seem like a lot of rules but remember, have fun! You are going to a festival, so loosen up and enjoy yourself. You might want glare at those inferior attendees that wear their New Balance sneakers, but just let them be. The poor things didn't know any better.



CATEGORY

1. TEXTILES

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Date Created

March 25, 2011

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