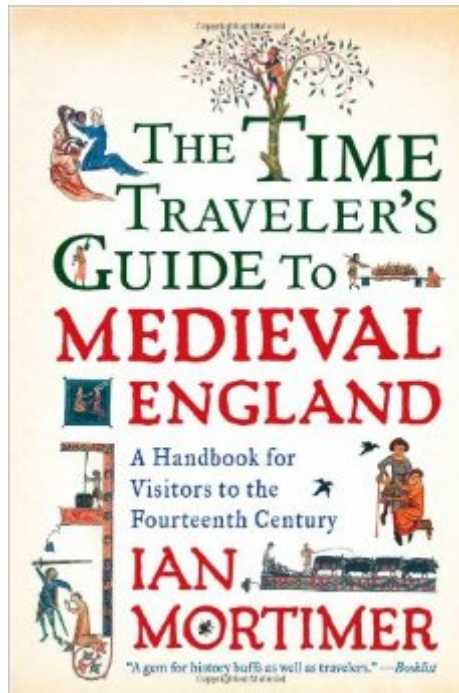


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The Time Traveler's Guide To Medieval England: A Handbook For Visitors To The Fourteenth Century



Synopsis

Now in paperback, a literary time machine that takes readers into the sights, smells, and tastes of the fourteenth century—a book that is revolutionary in its concept and startling in its portrayal of humanity. The past is a foreign country. This is your guidebook. A time machine has just transported you back into the fourteenth century. What do you see? How do you dress? How do you earn a living and how much are you paid? What sort of food will you be offered by a peasant or a monk or a lord? And more important, where will you stay? The Time Traveler's Guide to Medieval England is not your typical look at a historical period. This radical new approach shows us that the past is not just something to be studied; it is also something to be lived. Through the use of daily chronicles, letters, household accounts, and poems of the day, Mortimer transports you back in time, providing answers to questions typically ignored by traditional historians. You will learn how to greet people on the street, what to use as toilet paper, why a physician might want to taste your blood, and how to know whether you are coming down with leprosy. The result is the most astonishing social history book you're ever likely to read: revolutionary in its concept, informative and entertaining in its detail, and startling for its portrayal of humanity in an age of violence, exuberance, and fear.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Time Traveller's Guide to Medieval England is just that—a comprehensive traveler's guide to the fourteenth century in England. It covers pretty much anything and everything of day-to-day life, from the people you would have encountered, to the clothes you would have worn, to the kind of medical

treatment you would have received if you had gotten sick, and much, much more. There's a lot here I already knew, but a lot I didn't--for example, that pockets were introduced during this century, as were differentiated shoes (left foot versus right, in other words). It's details like this, that you wouldn't normally think are important, that really are important in daily life. At first, the present-tense writing threw me off; but, as Mortimer says in his introduction, once you begin understanding history as happening rather than as has happened, then you'll better understand the complexities of fourteenth-century life. As the back of the book paraphrases LP Hartley, "the past is a foreign country, they did things differently there..." It's not that things were bad or wrong with the way that people lived six hundred years ago; it's just that people back then had different ways of seeing the world. Take, for example, the chapter on health and medical practices. It's not that medical physicians and surgeons (two different things, up until the 17th century) were ignorant in the sense that we mean it; it's just that they used different areas of knowledge to make a diagnosis and treat a patient. Doctors and surgeons in the fourteenth century probably had as much knowledge as doctors do today--they just used things such as astronomy, religion, and blind faith in their practice. I wish the author had focused a little more on religion and education, however.

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