



Tudor Food

The Tudors is the name we give to people who lived in England 500 years ago, because the kings and queens at that time were from a family called Tudor. The most famous King was called Henry VIII and he was best known for two things; having six different wives and for eating lots of food.

What kind of foods do you think they had 500 years ago? Can you think of any foods they wouldn't have had?

Here are some foods that hadn't been discovered in 1520;

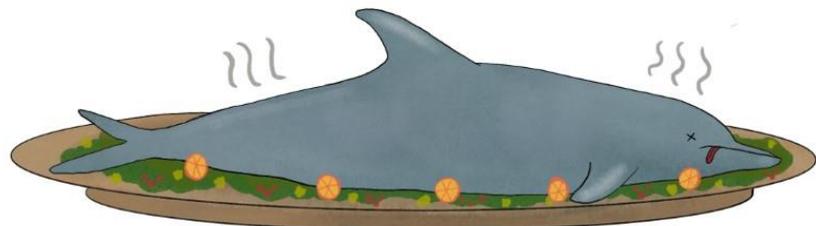
- Coffee
- Potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Chocolate



So then, what did they eat? Well, what you ate depended on how much money you had. If you were rich, you could eat all sorts of things and rich people used their meals to show off their wealth. Especially King Henry, which is why his banquets served the best food. Have you heard the word 'banquet' before? It means a very large dinner party with lots and lots of food.

Here are the sort of things you might have seen at a royal banquet;

- Mushy peas
- Swan
- Venison (deer)
- Eels
- Dolphin
- Peacock
- Pigeon
- Custard tart
- Gingerbread
- Rice pudding
- Pottage (a bit like soup)
- White bread

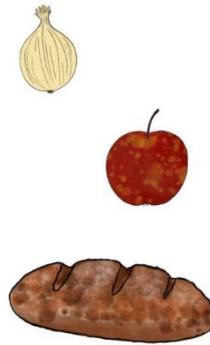


Royal banquets would also have spices from India and fruits and nuts from the Mediterranean (Spain and Italy) to show that they could afford to have food brought in from across the world, which in those days would have to be transported by horse and ship and could take weeks.

But what about the poorer people? Not many people in Tudor times were rich. In fact, many people could only afford to eat things they grew themselves, or could catch in the woods or rivers.

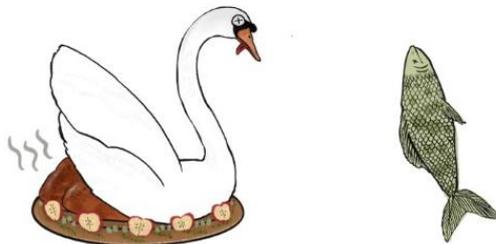
Here is the sort of thing poor people ate. See if you can spot the differences between these foods and the ones that Henry ate;

- Brown bread
- Vegetable or herb pottage
- Sparrows
- Cabbages
- Onions
- Chicken
- Beans and lentils
- Local fruit



What differences did you see? Did you notice that poor people ate a lot more fruit and vegetables than the rich people? Also, poor people only ate food that came from where they lived. No nuts and spices for them. In fact, sometimes poor people had to make bread by grinding up acorns!

Do you think you would have liked to be rich or poor 500 years ago?



Imagine eating the thing you like best from the list of foods. What are you going to drink to go with it?

Well, if you were rich, you would have drunk wine. Wine was expensive as it came from France, but that didn't worry King Henry. He and his friends drank 850 barrels of it a year. Plus he even had a special fountain that spouted wine instead of water for his guests!

If you were poor however, you would mostly drink beer, even if you were a child! This was because the Tudors couldn't clean their water like we can today, so it was often full of diseases. Beer was safe to drink, because it had to be 'brewed' (or heated up) which killed any nasty germs.

Now download the worksheet and see if you can come up with a menu that King Henry might like to eat.