

A Month's Worth of Viking Facts!

Our days of the week are named after Norse Gods. Except for Saturday which is Roman interloper!

If your town name ends in -by, -thorpe, or -ay then it was settled by Vikings!

Vikings loved a bit of honey using it to sweeten food and to make mead.

Vikings loved a good nickname including Ragnar Hairy Breeches and Ketil Flat-Nose.

Viking warriors were often buried in boats to help them reach the afterlife, often taking weapons, jewellery, and other prized possessions with them.

To figure out how bad a battle wound was, a Viking would be fed onion soup. If the smell came out through the wound, they knew it would be too deep to heal.

There were three main classes in Viking society - Jarls (nobles), Karls (farmers), and Thralls (slaves). This is where the phrase being *in thrall* to someone comes from.

Viking women had the right to divorce their husbands and to inherit property. This was progressive compared with many other cultures of the time.

Poetry was important to the Vikings and they invented the roast-battle. Known as Flyting it was a poetic exchange of insults.

One of a Viking's most prized possessions would be their swords. They were often given names such as leg-biter or blood-ice.

Vikings got together to settle disputes and make laws at an event called the 'Thing'.

The Bluetooth symbol is taken from a Viking rune and named after a Viking king - Harald Bluetooth!

Lots of English words are derived from Old Norse including: wing, reindeer, glitter, ugly and cake.

Why not make a glittery, ugly, reindeer cake to celebrate?

some Vikings would go into a trance like state in battle. These berserkers often wore wolf or bear skins.

Vikings landed in what is now Canada in around 1000 AD and named it Vinland.

Vikings would bleach their hair with lye to achieve beautiful blond tresses.

Vikings spent most of their time farming. They grew barley, rye, and oats as well as raising sheep, pigs and goats.

The Viking age lasted for just under 300 years between 900 AD and 1066.

Vikings believed in a range of Gods including Odin, Thor, and Freyja.

Vikings loved a bit of skiing. The Norse God of skiing is Ullr, which is also what I yell when travelling down-hill at high speed.

Some Vikings kept pets including cats, dogs, falcons, peacocks, and bears! Imagine finding one of those in your Christmas stocking! (Not Polar bears though, they were reserved for noblemen only).

On a midwinter night, keep an eye out for a mysterious older man with a long white beard from the far north, who will arrive in a chariot pulled by magical flying animals, giving out gifts (made by elves). That's right - Odin!

Vikings were very clean and used tweezers, razors, combs and even ear spoons to keep themselves looking lovely.

The word Viking means 'pirate raid' in Old Norse.

The Vikings didn't leave many written records, their histories and beliefs were passed on through story telling called sagas.

Vikings were expert boat builders, developing keels which made their longboats easy to steer.

Vikings probably travelled further than you think, reaching Russia, Canada, Baghdad, and Morocco.

Viking cuisine was pretty diverse, including seafood (unsurprisingly), horse, cattle, poultry, rye and wheat bread as well as fruits and vegetables.

Vikings used lots of different weapons in battle, but not swords, they were important ceremonial objects. Most Vikings would use a shield and spear or axe .

Vikings believed that at the battle at the end of the world, Loki would arrive in a boat made out of dead men's toenails. Why? I have so many questions.

Vikings never wore horned helmets!