

# Faire Survival Guide

or, Whaddya mean I gotta drink more water?

By Donna Flood



here are a few things in life that are engraved in stone. Death and taxes leap to mind immediately. For Faire folk, the very next thing on that list is DRINK WATER. Followed by eat something, and always wear sunscreen.

When it comes to working at any Faire (for all you new folks and casual Internet surfers) it is important to remember that they tend to be all-day, outdoor events. That means all kinds of weather -- be it hot, cold, sunny, windy, and/or dusty with all forms of precipitation. What is the Faire goer to do? The majority of these events are held in the spring and summers months, which means warm and sunny - translation: HOT! Add the several layers of costuming you'll be wearing and the term sweating bullets will come alive like it never has before. Because water depletion is one of the major issues any faire-goer will encounter, the following list concentrates on remedies for it, among other things. There are several ways to keep you healthy:

1. DRINK WATER. Start early and drink more than you think you need.
2. Drink Gatorade. As much as we all love to sample the local ale or must have our soda, please remember that these beverages will dehydrate you. When you indulge, remember the one-for-one rule: for every tankard of the stuff you drink, have a tankard of water, too. This also helps with those nasty hangovers! :-)
3. Eat something. With the heat, the heavy clothes, and the ever-popular "I'm having way too much fun" attitude, we tend to lose our appetite. In this heat, under the conditions that we work in, this is really bad! There's nothing more embarrassing than running out of gas on the freeway; the same thing happens to your body when you don't feed it properly: it tends to stop functioning, very suddenly! The simple way to ensure that this does not happen to you is to eat properly. Helpful hints: pickles are great on hot days, and oranges are always good.
4. Wear sunscreen. Direct exposure to sun all day long leads to sunburn and other nasty skin

conditions! Now, admittedly, some ladies are very proud of their bodice tans, and guys like to flex those manly brown arms; to those I say "good for you." For the rest of us (the majority who come out on the weekend and exposure their pale, pasty extremities to the unrelenting and unforgiving sun) I say "Put on some sunscreen, you twit! Do you want to look like a sideshow geek with your bad impersonation of a snake shedding its skin?" Two words: skin cancer. I've got it. You don't want to get it. Get the highest level of SPF sunscreen you can find (no lower than 30) - even if you don't think you need it. You will.

5. Wear appropriate clothing. Clothing is another important feature of your Faire Survival. Since we are doing re-creations, the fabrics used in making your costumes should be natural fibers. Natural fibers breathe. Yes -- even wool can be comfortable to wear in the summer for exactly this reason. Good sturdy shoes will save your feet from feeling like evil redheaded gremlins that you beat daily. We spend most of our time on uneven dirt and rock - and if we're lucky it's grass with gopher holes. So be kind to your feet, and they will be kind to you. Hats with a wide brim are another good way to beat the sun for men as well as women. Just because you're a "manly man", it doesn't mean you won't look good in a straw hat.

6. Get started on the right foot. Before the day even starts there are some tips that will ensure the stamina you will need to make it to the end of the day:

- Take your vitamins!
- Take any prescription meds you may be on, and make sure you've got a list of what you're taking in case you unexpectedly lose consciousness (which does happen to some).
- Warm-up exercises in the morning are excellent way to get the blood flowing to all the body parts you intend to use that day. Proper

stretching of those poor abused, "I partied too hard last night and had to sleep on the cold hard ground" muscles will go a long way to keeping you in the game.

7. The last thing, and I can't stress enough, is listen to your body! When it tells you that it has had enough, take a break. Find some shade and sit down, then get your body whatever it says it wants, be it water, food, or just a rest. Otherwise, when the Event Staff finds you suffering from heat or sun stroke, gopher hole

encounters, or just plain "I didn't take care of myself", they'll put a toe tag on you, and you will lay unclaimed at First Aide till the end of the weekend. It usually takes that long for anyone to figure out you're missing, not just out partying or dodging guild duties. These simple, common-sense rules come to you from all of us who have gone before you and have learned this the hard way. By heeding these hard-won pearls of wisdom that we willingly share with you, you will be spared having to re-enact the historically accurate short lifespan of the era we recreate.

**Donna Flood**