



Pasquerele, Joan and La Hire

Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc Costume Guide

Historic costume expert Antoinette de Alteriis (e-mail [Co-Captain Antoinette](#)) gives free advice to krewe members as our costume consultant. She posts costume tips on our [Facebook page](#) and her [Pinterest Board](#). Our website <http://www.joanofarcparade.org> has many photos of past parades that might help too.



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Overview

Note: Many of our members are artisans and love to talk about their costumes. Don't let that intimidate you! Off-the-rack medieval costumes are widely available and are perfectly acceptable for the parade.

Parade Roles

Krewe members are encouraged to represent people who would have been in Joan's world, which was 1400s France, considered "Middle Ages." [See our full list of parade sections \(battalions\) with characters we already have and characters we'd like to add.](#)

- Upper class/Nobility: Lords and ladies
- Peasants
- Knights and soldiers: In the spirit of Joan we welcome male and female knights and soldiers
- Clerics: monks, nuns, priests, bishops etc.
- Tradespeople: innkeepers, artisans, merchants
- Medieval festival roles: jester, stilt walker, musician, fool
- Specific characters from Joan's history
- Creative costume interpretations of Joan's story are welcome (fire dancers, angels, butterflies, etc.)



[Wikipedia 1300-1400 European Fashion \(Joan is very early 1400s\)](#)

[Wikipedia 1400-1500 European Fashion](#)

Tips for all costumes:

- **Bright, high-contrast colors** show up best at night, and a little glitz or shine helps too. Because medieval lighting was often even dimmer than the French Quarter, real medieval clothing often used [vibrant colors](#) we might call garish today and rich clothing used pearls, [gems, metal spangles and gold and silver thread](#) to sparkle in candlelight.
- Look for ways to work a **large basket, bag, medieval cart**, etc. into your costume for your throws.
- **Be warm!** Incorporate a medieval cloak, hat or wrap.

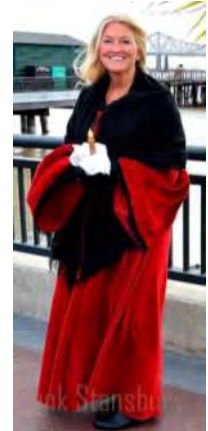
Bargains From Your Closet & Other Shortcuts



- For most male medieval costumes or for females dressing as knights or pages, dark solid colored ordinary dress pants, leggings or sweat pants **tucked into tall boots** can look great, with a long shirt, armor or tunic hiding your modern waist band. You can see the modern boots and leggings blending nicely with the medieval tunics on our supporting cast members (left).

- Ladies, many peasant or poet shirts and long full solid skirts can pass as medieval by adding a bodice or overdress and medieval accessories. Medieval patterns were typically solid colors, woven stripes or brocades.

- Large woven dress scarves (right) may pass as medieval if you wear them shawl-style or peasant-style over your head and pinned under your chin.



going to wear a splashy tunic, armor, veil, hood and/or cloak, your shirt may hardly show at all. Get by with a dark solid color sweatshirt underneath and invest in your top layers and accessories instead.

- Many modern shoes can pass as medieval (see our medieval shoe page for ideas). If you can't find one in your closet, it might be smarter to invest in a good comfortable shoe or boot you can walk in and wear on other occasions than to mess with cheap costume shoes or shoe covers.

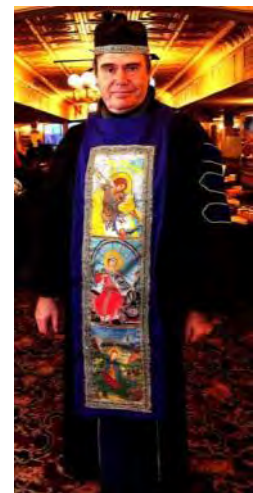
- Your own or grandma's jewelry box might have some big brooches, rings or pendants. Or thrift stores and garage sales.

- Fur coats, cloaks, wraps and stoles are very medieval and styles haven't changed that much. (left)

- Doctoral, clergy and choir robes are all based on medieval dress with their full sleeves and flowing gown. (Hmm, does that mean the church and the universities are still stuck in the



Middle Ages?) Our supporting cast burgundy tunics (top left) are made from shortened choir robes embellished with the krewe coat of arms and some harlequin trim. Ebay is a good source for bargain used robes; look for full cut, matte finish, crepe robes with cuffed sleeves, although open sleeves are OK too. Avoid the cheap shiny lightweight graduation gowns. Right, Eduardo Silva's academic robe doubles as a medieval priest costume.



Commercial Costumes

Medieval commercial costumes for men, women and children are widely available. Like the handmade costumes in our krewe, commercial costumes tend to offer a balance among popular preference, actual period looks, modern fabrics, and budget. Google searches for “medieval man costume” “medieval woman costume” etc. will point you toward a plethora of options for various budgets. The following keywords tend to be associated with the right kind of costume: medieval, Middle Ages, Joan of Arc, 15th century costume. Robin Hood and King Arthur were earlier but medieval dress hadn’t changed much since then, so Robin Hood, Lancelot, Maid Marian, Guinevere may be helpful keywords. The following keywords are NOT likely to be a good fit: Viking, baroque, Victorian, steampunk, pirate, Queen Elizabeth, Henry VIII, Tudor, Italian, Roman, Florentine, Musketeer, colonial. “Renaissance” has been rather bastardized by the costume industry and is likely to emphasize these more elaborate styles so you may have more luck with the term “medieval.” We represent the early to mid-Middle Ages. While “Renaissance” and “Late Middle Ages” overlap, this later clothing is more elaborate than our era. If your costume ends up a century off, it’s OK. We’ll strive for plus or minus a hundred years of 1430.

Louisiana Renaissance Festival

Open weekends Nov. through mid-December near Hammond, LA. Offers many costumes and accessories you can try on and purchase on site <http://www.larf.org/> Krewe members usually go as a group in November.

Links to Buy: Lords, Ladies, Soldiers and Peasants

Better quality commercial costumes (for men, women and children)

<http://www.historicalclothingrealm.com/>

<http://www.revivalclothing.com/>

<http://www.pearsonsrenaissanceshoppe.com/>

<http://www.bythewordinc.com/>

<https://www.medievalcollectibles.com/>

[Camelot’s Closet](#)

[Dark Knight Armoury](#)

Bargain –the big difference between these cheaper costumes and the more expensive ones is the type of fabric. Rich medieval clothes used yards and yards of luxurious fabric. There’s no cheap shortcut to that today, but authentic peasant costumes are still cheap! Also, the bodice on the cheap costumes typically lacks boning.

[Medieval Peasants](#)

[Lady Wholesale Halloween Costumes.com,](#)

[HalloweenCostumes.com,](#)

Note: “sexy” costumes are not authentic and you will freeze.

Cover cleavage with a shawl or wimple & veil

[CostumesForLess.com](#)

[BuyCostumes.com](#) (not Vikings!).

[Robin Hood 2](#) costume: Peasant clothes hadn’t changed much since Robin, and Joan needed all the archers she could get!. Avoid very green Robin Hoods that will make our crowd think too much of Robin.

[Medieval Maiden](#) NOTE: leaning Renaissance, but fun and pretty and somewhere in the right century



Making or Custom-Ordering a Costume



Many medieval clothes have simple construction and are easy even for beginners. Historic and costume patterns are available in fabric stores and by internet order, and the internet abounds with simple how-to instructions. Here's the Antoinette-approved [Medieval Tailor's Assistant](#), a full-length medieval costumers' bible of how-to instructions and historical background available free online and an [encyclopedia](#)-like index of period examples (scroll down to the clothing section).

Fabric

Our local [Jefferson Variety](#) carries costume fabrics, with the best selection in town for sparkly fabrics and medieval-style trims. Regular fabric stores such as JoAnn's carry brocades, linens, muslin, silks, pseudosilks, costume patterns, wools and fleece. Wool was the dominant medieval fabric and fleece works well as a warm substitute. Home décor fabrics are often good for medieval styles. Try searching "[vestment](#)" (esp. [galloon](#)) on Ebay to find affordable, showy medievaesque trims, brocades and appliques too – vestments (formal church clothing) are basically medieval and many of the rich fabrics and trims are not specifically religious.



- Printed fabric was nonexistent. Fabrics were solid, embroidered, appliqued or had woven patterns such as stripes, and, for the rich, brocades and jacquards.
- Color patterns were also created by layering contrasting colors (such as a split overskirt revealing a contrasting chemise beneath) and parti-coloured clothes created by piecing clothes out of different fabrics in a mirror image (top right)
- Rich and poor often wore similar styles, using different fabrics and trims.
- Colors were often symbolic, for the season or for coats of arms.
- **Use bright, contrasting colors in our night parade.** Navy, dark green, and deep purple look black, and subtle color differences vanish. Medieval lighting was even worse than French Quarter lighting, so colors were often garish by today's standards. The rich embellished clothing with sequin-like [metal spangles, gold thread, jewels and pearls](#) to sparkle in candlelight and firelight. So feel free to use plenty of metallics.



Links to Instructions

- [Medieval tunic \(shirt\)](#)
- [Simple tabard and tunic instructions](#), with ideas for color piecing)
- [circle cloak](#), and the [super-easy version](#)
- [Medieval Tailor's Assistant](#) book
- Women's [Burgundian Gown \(top left\)](#)





Knights

The Krewe de Jeanne d'Arc would really love to have more knights, and knights have the option to march with the Lady's Knights Auxiliary in the front of the parade (male and female knights in the service of the lady Joan!).

Let's face it – real plate armor, chain mail and steel swords cost an arm and a leg and weigh down your arms and legs too. This makes authentic costuming of knights challenging. Chainmail and plate armor continue to fascinate the public, so you CAN still buy both if you are willing to spend

the money and carry the weight. Full suits of armor were at the peak of their popularity in Joan's time, but those who couldn't afford that would have had a [brigandine](#) or cloth coat riveted with small plates, leather armor, chainmail and or tunic, which means you can create the look for a costume with only a little chainmail showing.

[Commercial costumes are widely available](#) for men and children.



- Consider [making your own tabard](#) and decorating with a coat of arms or using the colors. Besides our krewe crest (download logos from the Members Only section of the website, here's some [coats of arms](#) associated with Joan and her comrades

- Snow White's armor (left) in the Snow White and The Huntsman movie was modeled on Joan of Arc's armor, and [commercial replicas](#) are available for women and tweens.

- Antoinette and other krewe members copied the plate design of the Snow White costume and built some armor out of the silver side of car headliner fabric and quilted iron fabric.

- A loose-knit silver or gray sweater offers a credible imitation of chainmail– a Google or ebay search for "loose knit silver sweater" "mesh sweater" and/or "fishnet sweater" will likely turn up suitable results. Here is a [beautiful chain mail costume knit](#) to buy, and some of our krewe members have gotten good effects by [spraypainting a sweater](#). You can also imitate chainmail with sequin fabric or silver fishnet or mesh fabric.
- [Child armor set](#) (\$9)

Antoinette-approved Swords

- [Lion Knight sword](#) (\$10ish, 3 feet, good size for women, teens, or small men, appropriate details & fleur de lis)
- [Aragorn sword](#) (\$15, 4 feet, good size for men, appropriate to the era)



Church Costumes

Commercial medieval monks: [link to Google shopping results](#)



Clergy were a significant part of the population in 1400s France and played a huge role in Joan's story. The church was the center of education and convents were one of the few places where women could have power. Medieval monk costumes are widely available and the popular commercial brown medieval monk costume is fairly historically accurate. We used it for our supporting cast monks and nuns, adding only a period white muslin



“scapular” tunic over the top to make it show better at night. Oddly, commercial nun costumes are much more modern but the monk robe plus a wimple and veil is what medieval nuns would have worn. Many church vestments (the robes, stoles, capes, etc., that priests and choirs wear) used today were based on everyday medieval clothing and can be a start for medieval clergy costumes (bottom right). eBay is a great source for bargains on used choir robes, clergy robes, chasubles, stoles and scapulars. Our Voices of Joan battalion members (bottom left) are costumed as medieval abbesses in used choir robes topped with medieval scapulars and fillet and veil hats.



Hats & Headdresses

Hats are strongly encouraged.

- Most of us have modern hair that rather ruins the medieval costume effect.
- Hats and wigs are warm
- Medieval hats look exotic to the modern eye, making the parade more spectacular
- In medieval times almost all adults covered their heads most of the time.
- Here's a quality commercial costume site with a [great selection of medieval hats](#)

Unisex Medieval Hoods

Loose and draping, medieval hoods were commonly integrated with a capelet or collar around the neck and shoulders which can hide modern collars *and* keep your neck warm, a great costume topper even when pushed back off your head. There are plenty of easy patterns and ready-made hoods available online. Commonly made of wool or leather and often fur-lined; fleece can be a modern alternative. Can be rugged and simple for a peasant look or highly decorated. Many hoods included a liripipe or long tail off the back of the hood (upper left). [Simple medieval hood pattern](#), Another [Simple medieval hood pattern](#), [a](#)



Unisex Muffin Hats

“Muffin hat” is a modern slang term costumers use to describe a variety of similarly constructed hats both men and women have worn across all social classes through the ages resembling a fuller, floppier beret. It is made of a narrow band with a circle of fabric gathered on to it, and a broad variety of looks can be achieved with homespun or elegant fabrics, more or less flop, more or less trim, and positioning the hat at different angles. Women may wear it off the back of the head with the hair tucked inside, in which case it becomes a snood (below right).



Left, our supporting cast banner carriers (ensigns) wear white tunics with red liripipe hoods; other supporting cast wear burgundy livery tunics accompanied by a muffin hat.

Other Men's and Unisex Hats



[Turbans](#), close-fitting [caps](#) and straw hats were common for both sexes (above). Below, some [common men's hat shapes](#).



Women's Hats

Snood or caul: functionally a net or bag to hold the hair, this can be a coarse or fine fabric hat made much like the muffin hat but often was made out of a mesh or net of some kind. Since it was considered proper for women to cover their hair in medieval times, the net snood was a way for women to show off their rich tresses while still seeming modest. Keywords medieval or renaissance and caul or snood should help you find plenty of options to purchase ready made or patterns.



Snoods (above); other head coverings below.



Barbet and Fillet: the fillet (crown-like shape) and barbet (chin strap) can be combined with a veil or snood. We offer instructions for [a “cheater” version of the pleated “pie crust” style fillet and veil](#)



Wimple and Veil: The wimple (usually white) is a soft drape close around the head and neck, usually accompanied by a free-flowing veil (any color) and/or a fillet, hood or other hat. In medieval times any woman might wear this; some nuns still wear them today. Wimples can be constructed in various ways ranging from a simple rectangular piece of cloth draped and pinned to a custom-shaped head casing. We offer instructions for [a “cheater” wimple and veil combo](#) which our supporting cast “nuns” wear for the parade.





Later hats: Hennin (cone hat) and French hood. The cone-style hennin hat often depicted in modern images of medieval princesses came into style in the late 1430s (just after Joan's death). Queen Yolande is described historically as wearing a notoriously tall one (left, below). Double-pointed or heart-shaped hennins came into style near the end of the 1400s (center). The crown-like French hood commonly depicted as a medieval costume hat came during the mid-1500s, a full century after Joan, popularized by Anne Boleyn (left, below).



Hair & Wigs

A good summary of medieval hairstyles: <http://rosaliegilbert.com/hairstyles.html>

Men were primarily clean-shaven and wore their hair shorter, commonly shoulder length or nape length, but sometimes shorter. It was acceptable for men to go out in public with a bare head, and men's hats commonly showed the hair, so a wig can add to the authenticity of a medieval men's costume. However, by the mid 1500s (Tudor era), many men such as King Henry VIII wore short hair that looks much like a modern cut, so you're only a century off if you choose not to!



With the exception of Joan's shocking short hair, **women** always wore their hair long and almost always covered it and wore it braided or bound in some way. Bangs were unheard of; a high forehead was valued and showed off, even extended by plucking the hairline. Only young unmarried women wore their hair loose. A woman's hair was considered erotic and must be covered for decency; a net-style snood or thin veil gave a nod to modesty while still showing off the hair. Hollywood draws its romantic images of bare medieval women's heads primarily from Renaissance Italy, not medieval France, and medieval painters sometimes used it to symbolize virginity. A veil or snood can cover your modern hair, but if you're longing for long tresses and plan to wear a net snood or

thin veil, there are plenty of wigs and hair falls available for a modern woman to use to boost the authenticity of a medieval headdress.

Men's and women's wigs available from online suppliers

			
Braided side buns wigs		Buns custom to match your color	Example with medieval headress
			
Flamenco wig in auburn , blonde	Braided Renaissance wig in brown , black	Braided Renaissance wig in brown , blonde , dark brown/black	
			
Venetian man wig available in 10 colors	MaxWigs (five colors)	Game of Thrones wig	Beethoven wig

[MaxWigs](#) has a wide range of costume wigs and inexpensive women's wigs designed for everyday wear which could work for a woman's costume for long hair or for a man's costume for shoulder-length or bobbed hair.

For women whose natural hair is long enough to put in a ponytail, [Etsy artists](#) sell many delightful add-on braids and buns in a wide range of prices. [MaxWigs](#) also carries a number of affordable hair falls.



Keeping Warm

The average night low for New Orleans for our parade night January 6 is 43° -- comfortable if you're dressed for it. Cold winters are fully authentic to medieval France, and realistically it will never feel toasty warm on the New Orleans riverfront at night in January, so PLAN your costume accordingly. PLEASE, PLEASE do NOT

ruin your great medieval costume by putting a modern coat on top. Here's some things you can do instead:



- 1) Layer underneath.
- 2) Incorporate a hat, hood, headdress and/or wig into your costume.
- 3) Wear gloves. Knit, leather or evening gloves are fine.
- 4) Incorporate a medieval "coat" into your costume:

- Cloaks: You can find many medieval-style cloaks available to purchase online. A medieval cloak would

most likely be wool (modern substitute fleece), and could be silk or fur-lined. A cloak is also easy to make. Here's some [history on medieval cloaks](#), and here's some cloak instructions: [easy](#), [better](#), and [7 ways to make a cape](#). You can make a cloak out of a heavy weight circle table cloth, a blanket or throw.

- **Woven** shawls were popular but **knitting** wasn't invented yet.
- Furs were popular for cloaks, collars, trim, linings, wraps, stoles etc. Real or artificial fur is fine for the parade.
- Cover a modern coat: In the rare case you need a real coat, one option is to cover a solid color wool or wool-look dress coat. Medieval "coats" were flowing loose capes, not tailored coats. Draping a shawl or caplet on top of a tailored coat can add a draping effect and hide modern buttons, collar, zipper etc.



Deer skin fur-lined gloves from Joan's era



Krewe members Leigh Hennessy and Mark Robson made these great fur cloaks out of a plush throw over a long leather coat.

Particoloured Clothing & How to Make It



Particoloured clothing makes a GREAT costume for the parade because:

- It looks festive and exotic to the modern eye
- It's strongly associated with medieval times
- It's REALLY easy to make

It was especially popular with musicians, jesters and other entertainers, but many other people wore it as well.

Traditionally one side of the body was one color and the other side a contrasting color as a mirror image – usually the body was “cut in half” on a vertical line down the middle, but sometimes in quarters (left). Sometimes the two colors chosen would be heraldic colors (from the coat of arms).

Super Easy Particoloured Outfits

1) Makes 2. Buy two slightly roomy sweatshirts and sweatpants in contrasting colors (hood can be nice).

Remember, fleece is a good modern substitute for a wool look. Choose them to match the colors of a relevant coat of arms if you like. Roomy is nice because you will lose an inch or so out of the middle when you resew it; also you can get a fuller medieval look.

2) Turn the sweatshirts inside out and smooth them out, mark a line with a ruler, and cut the sweatshirts vertically right down

the middle of the front, then the back, including the hood.

3) Take the right side from color A and the left side of color B.

Pin right sides together and sew. Turn right side out. Repeat for the other side.

4) Conveniently sweatpants are already made with a seam in the middle of the seat joining the two halves. Cut the two halves apart right along the seam. Trim the excess layers of fabric where the seam was.

5) Take the right leg from color A and the left leg from color B. Pin right sides together (inside out) and resew the center seam. Turn right side out. Repeat with the remaining legs to create a second pair of mixed pants.



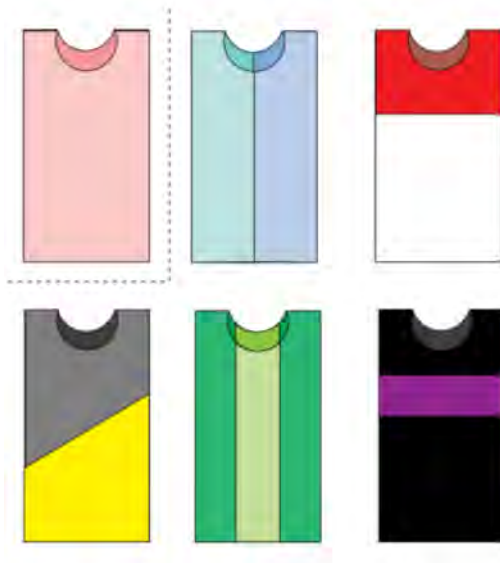
6) Optional: If you only need one set or if you purchase a couple of extra sweatshirts, you can use the extra fabric to top off the existing hood with a matching collar (right), or make a contrasting collar to stitch to the hoodie or a full separate hood. (hood and [collar pattern](#))



More Particoloured and Heraldic Clothing



• Since many clothing patterns include a fold or seam down the center of the body, it's not hard to adapt many medieval patterns to a particoloured look such as the dress at right. Just add a half inch on each side for seam allowance. A further embellishment is to combine particolor with symbols and colors from the coat of arms so that the outfit becomes an embodiment of the coat of arms (left and below). This heraldic clothing is all over medieval paintings, but scholars agree this was more common in paintings (to symbolize identity) than in real life clothing, although it WAS very common for real knights' tabards and royal ceremonial clothes. Link to [coats of arms](#) associated with Joan and her comrades. Link to more [about heraldic clothing](#).



Super Easy No-Sew Particoloured Hose

Like the medieval painting at left

1. Buy 2 pairs of tights or leggings in 2 different contrasting colors.
2. Cut the right leg off one pair and the left leg off the other at the upper thigh, leaving the waist and seat intact.
3. Put on one leg and waist.
4. Put on the other leg and waist, layering the two waists.

Above: some other ideas for easy piecing to add interest to a standard tabard

- [Tabard instructions: \(elaborate version\)](#), with ideas for color piecing)

Medieval Shoes



Although plenty of tempting medieval replica shoes are available online or at the renaissance faires, plenty of affordable, practical and comfortable modern shoes can easily pass for medieval, probably even from your own closet. If you're going to invest in a costume shoe, you might rather have one with a modern fit, sole and arch support. Medieval shoes were mostly matte finish leather flats; ladies' slippers could be cloth and quite fancy. **Parade-OK:** buckles, toggles, primitive laces, moderate heels, clogs, sandals (sandals with wool socks for winter especially for monks and peasants), tall and short boots, fur, ballet slippers, loafer styles, stamped leather, embroidery.

AVOID: visually prominent zippers or Velcro (a discreet zipper in a boot is ok), very high or spiked heels, laces with metal eyelets or tongues, oxfords, cowboy boots, neon colors, obviously synthetic materials (artificial leather is fine), hiking or work boots, Victorian lace-up or button-up shoes. **NO TENNIS SHOES.**

If you MUST have tennis shoes medically, make them a discreet SOLID black.

