

Food & Feast in Tudor England, Third Edition (Food & Feasts)

Alison Sim

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Popular representations of the Tudors at table have caricatured them as loud, gross, and lacking any manners. This is actually far from the case, as food and dining were used as social display by the upwardly mobile. For those with money, meals became extravagantly sophisticated, with a staggering number of courses and breathtaking table displays. Even those lower down the social scale enjoyed some of the benefits of increasing prosperity and the new markets which England's merchants exploited, bringing new foodstuffs into the country and new ideas about eating. Alison Sim also explores Tudor ideas about healthy eating, as they were aware of the effects of various foods on the body and the health-giving properties of certain ingredients. Etiquette, too, was treated with great seriousness in this period, as those who wished to impress a potential patron or benefactor were keen to show off their good manners. What emerges from this evidence is a more balanced and certainly more attractive picture of the Tudors at table.



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