

# ANCIENT NORSE CULTURE

Debunking myths & stereotypes  
about Vikings



Æ  
H  
K  
L  
E  
N  
O

Φ  
A  
S  
↑  
X  
T  
Λ

# Composition of a Viking name

First name + father's name + suffix -son/ -dottir

-son: if it's a boy

-dottir: if it's a girl

E.g. A warrior named Gunnar has two children, a boy & a girl, named Folkvardr & Thurid.

The boy's complete name will be Folkvardr Gunnarson & the girl's Thurid Gunnardottir.





# Norse household

- & **Men:** They set the rules **outside** home.
- & **Women:** They had the power **inside** their abode.
- & **Children:** They helped with the everyday tasks from a young age.
- & **Distribution:** Farms usually had 3 or 4 different rooms. The “living room”, “ceremonial hall”  
& the stables were the most basic.



# Diet in the Olden Times

- & **Meat:** Lamb, mutton, pork, chicken, goose, duck, goat, horse, ox, game meat & even bear, squirrel, seagull, seal, walrus & whale.
- & **Fish:** Trout, salmon, perch, cod, coalfish, shrimp, herring, haddock, flat-fish, horse mackerel, shellfish, roach, oyster & eel were common.
- & **Fruits:** Hazelnut, sloe, plum, apple, berries. Walnuts, almonds, figs, grapes & chestnuts were imported.
- & **Vegetables:** Turnip, celery, carrot, spinach, cabbage, radish, endive, beet, mushroom, leek, onion, seaweed, beans & peas.





# Diet in the Olden Times

‡ **Dairies:** butter, buttermilk, whey, skyr (dairy made of curdled milk), curds & cheese.

‡ **Porridge:** Usually contained oat & barley.

‡ **Breads:** Made of barley & wheat. It could include other cereals like oats, linseed or even sprouted peas.

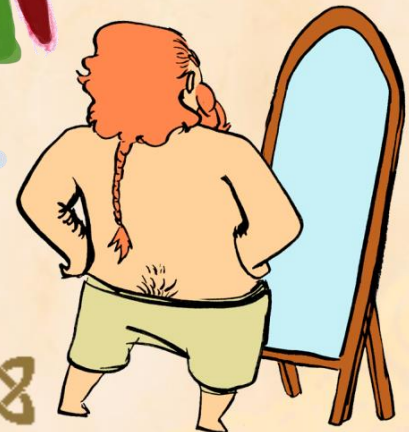
‡ **Beverages:** Ale, mead & fruit wine were the most common. Other beverages included milk, buttermilk, whey, and plain water.

As far as **spices & herbs** go, they had access to pretty much all of them via trade. **Vinegar & honey** were used to flavour food.



# Dress code & fashion

## Male





# Dress code & fashion

Female



А  
В  
Г  
Д  
Е  
Ж  
З  
И  
Й

Ф  
А  
С  
↑  
Ж  
Т  
М

# Personal hygiene

Vikings were among the **cleanest** tribes back in the Dark & Middle Ages.

β **Bathing habits:** quick wash everyday & bath day always on Laugardagr.

β **Grooming:** Combs, tweezers, ear spoons & razors.

β Hands were washed before **every** meal.





# Naval & trading prowess & discoveries

- β **Drakkars:** Fastest wind powered warships for several centuries (reached 10-11 knots). They were oar powered too. Shallow keel, perfect to navigate rivers.
- β **Trading:** One of the biggest trading “empires” at the time (from Bagdad to Greenland & rumored, America for a little bit). Vikings exchanged iron weapons for spices & jewelery.
- β Most of them spoke more than one **foreign language** thanks to all the travelling, especially traders.



# Naval & trading prowess & discoveries





# Religious beliefs & Valhala

- ß **Odin/Odinn/Wodan:** Allfather, the king of the Norse pantheon. God of war & wisdom. Warriors invoked his name before battle.
- ß **Thor:** God of Thunder, son of Odin. His magical warhammer Mjöltnir was the origin of lightning. He was a favourite among the people.
- ß **Loki:** God of Lies, deceit & trickery. He's a jötun & fahter to all the monsters that will one day cause the Ragnarok. Vikings didn't like him much.
- ß **Tyr:** Original god of war. Had to make way when Odin became more popular.
- ß **Frigg/Frigga:** Goddess of marriage & motherhood, wife to Odin. Was very popular among women.
- ß **Freya/Freyja:** Goddess of love & fertility. Women adored her, even völvas.
- ß **Hel/Hell/Hella:** Goddess of the dead, daughter of Loki & ruler of Helheim. Origin of the word Hell as a synonym of inferno.



# Religious beliefs & Valhala

To reach **Valhala**, Hall of the Slain, was the objective of every Viking. It had 540 rooms. The rafters were spears, the hall was roofed with shields and breast-plates littered the benches. It was **Viking heaven**. When the battle of **Ragnarok** commences, eight hundred warriors will march shoulder to shoulder out of each door.

- & Death during battle
- & Death on a duel
- & Suicide





# Law system

& Intricate law system

& The Thing/Allthing

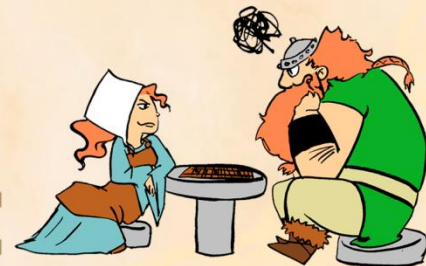
& Divorce



# Viking pastimes

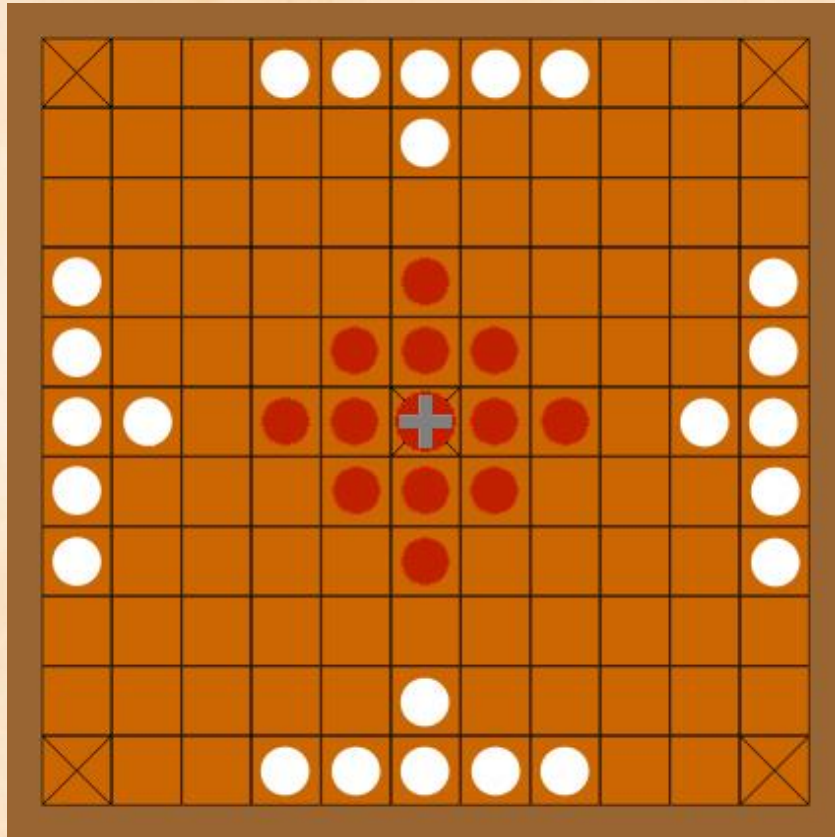
- β **Physical pastimes:** footracing, swimming, wrestling, skiing, archery & other strength related activities very similar to the Highland Games.
- β **Intellectual pastimes:** board games akin to chess. The most popular among them was Hnefatafl & variants of it. They also played backgammon & of course, chess imported from Persia.
- β **Drinking games:** Self explanatory.

Women were **allowed** to take part in both, intellectual & drinking games.





# Viking pastimes



Hnefatafl

Red dots: The king & his men

White dots: Invaders



# Inherited words

**Monday:** Moon's day (Munni)

**Tuesday:** Tyr's day

**Wednesday:** Wodan's day (Odin)

**Thursday:** Thor's day

**Friday:** Frigg's day/Freya's day

**Saturday:** Saturn's day (the only non-Viking related day)

**Sunday:** Sun's day





# Vikings as a source of inspiration

- β **Tolkien:** Rohan, hobbit houses, different races of Middle Earth, Gandalf...
- β **Heavy Metal bands**
- β **Comic books & manga:** Marvel & Vinland Saga.
- β **Opera:** Wagner

