

. If you've never gone to a renaissance festival before , but always wanted to go, then this is the place for you. The Bay Area renaissance festival seems to have pulled together the various smaller venues that we have all been used to. The smaller venues were in the different municipalities and quite cleverly and I think effectively, the organizers have pulled them all together and put everything renaissance in one place. It is a Tour de force for this venue and type of entertainment.

Definitely pick up the brochure on the way in. The most important part of the brochure will be the map. The area for the festival is huge and uh without it you won't be able to find the different venues and activities that they offer.











In between the shows just wander around. The area is very large and the performers, vendors and organizers are very inviting and friendly. You will find that the organizers and many of the guests who dress up in a tire are in-character.

You will have a great time as well with the different props and stages that are set up. Everything and anything medieval is represented here. And the organizers have to thank their lucky stars that their customers also come dressed for performance. The combination is really something to see.

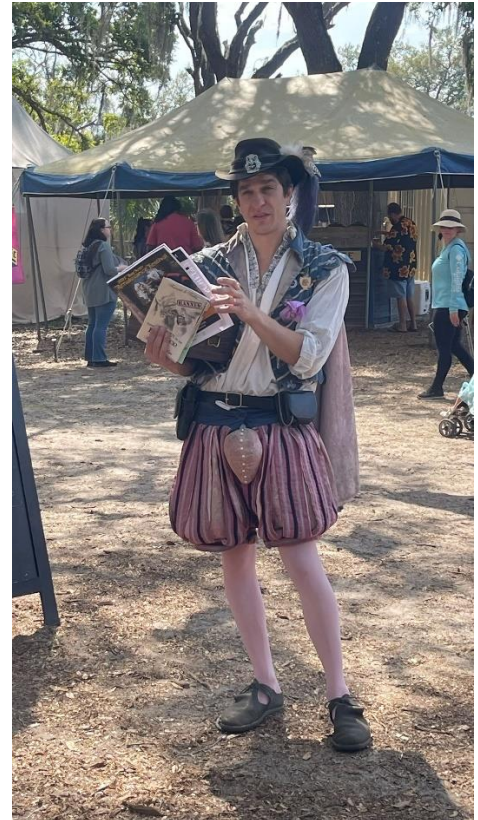


If you are lacking in medieval attire, or have always wanted to buy such, then are you in the right place. The vendors here have gone all out and you can really suit yourself up for the next event, or spruce up your medieval garb with any number of accoutrements. Go all out.

If you can't find your medieval uniform, weapons or paraphernalia at this event then I don't think it's made. Anything and everything you could want is here.







There are many places where you want to take photographs and are reluctant to do so. If you take any photographs you typically ask the person if it's allowed and most of the times you will get at least the reluctant acknowledgement. Well put those fears to rest at the Bay Area renaissance festival.

The organizers, customers in costume and vendors are thrilled that you want their photograph. This is the reason for being and why they have come to these festivals. I can imagine that for many of these folk these renaissance festivals are lifelong activities. You can see that some of these costumes have been decades in the making. You've got to admit that these gentle people look marvelous.





I kept taking pictures and uh only when I thought that I had seen it all that I turn around and see something else that was even more unique and inspiring . Again they actors, organizers and customers are thrilled that you want to photograph them. They live for this.

And what imagination they have. Of course these could be characters out of film, cartoon books, or other references but again now I am not steeped in medieval folklore. All I know is that these people looked great.





Once again make sure you catch the performances. As I stated map out where they're going to be and looking at the times what order you're going to see them. This really is a four ring circus but it can be organized for enjoyment.







Get to the different venues early and have a seat. Typically if you can arrive at least 15 minutes early you can easily find a good place to watch the show.

These actors and performers do this out of sheer love. They will tell you that their compensation comes solely from these performances. You will be surprised as well that they come from afar and uh have driven across the country to perform in these festivals.







You will not be able to spontaneously walk into these events and certainly you will miss out on a great deal of them, unless you organize yourself when you arrive. The best way to do this as I have stated is to use the schedule and the map.

Crazy Boy Coy Was great. He traveled here from out of state to perform at this festival. He was truly a unique , organic natural born entertainer.







Did I mention that the Renaissance festival had jousting? Well everybody comes to these festivals to see two things, jousting and sword fighting. The festival did not disappoint. But, you have to get to the jousting area early about 45 minutes before the event in order to get good seating. You won't be disappointed. This is the real deal.





Tonight square off on mounted horseback. Even before the jousting starts there are entertainers to hype up the crowd and tell us what is some history about this night in armor event.

The two captains on horseback will motivate each section of this audience. You become participants in the contest. It's great fun and certainly worth it. You can easily see that if they do not practice this, much like professional wrestlers , that what appears to be fun and entertainment can turn into a serious injury. So, don't try this on your own.







Did I mention that they had a May Pole? The organizers did not mention why this poll was associated with the month of may, but it must have been a spring thing in the Renaissance .

The weaving of the colored strands was uneventful except for a lady who wasn't watching her step and fell straight forward onto the ground, interrupting the smooth flow of activity. I guess even the May Pole has its challenges.





And there are dress and costumes of every shape and variety. Again all you have to do is take a picture you don't have to ask for permission. These actors and a lot of customers, are very happy to have their images taken. I would imagine that they spent hundreds of hours as well as dollars getting these costumes ready; it really adds that extra special touch to the Renaissance festival.



This gentleman, dressed as a merry traveler of the open Rd. Was approached to take an image. Before I could snap the picture he stopped and yelled over my shoulder; "wench come back here at once for a photograph." Well that lovely lady that accompanied him came back so I could take both their picture. So this was the attitude that these Mary travelers had all throughout the event.





I would not recommend this as a Halloween costume, unless you're gonna do it handing out candy on a front porch. Yes this is a man dressed as a Bush inside of a pot standing next to some type of renaissance colonial traveler. This had to be the most unique costume that I saw.

Again I don't think these were part of the organizing staff. These were just customers that came dressed to attend and entertain.





I have always wanted to try axe throwing. What better place than to start then at the Renaissance festival.

And you get to throw 6 axes for \$5. Where else can you get such a great bargain. Come to find out throwing axes isn't as easy as it looks. At least not throwing it and getting the axe to stick into the wood that you're flinging it at. All of mine simply bounced off. But I still had fun.

These are the types of activities that you can do while you are waiting for the shows to start. Or, while you are marking time before the sword fighting, or jousting begin. Take advantage of them.





This event was as dangerous as it looks. I wonder anymore organized , commercialized event if this type of risk taking would even be allowed. I can't begin to take you through the aerobatics that this person did, but at each stage he could easily have fallen off of this contraption and seriously injured himself.

At the end of each of these activities the participants ask for tips. In a day when anyone standing somewhere at a market that hands you a cup of coffee wants a tip, these persons really deserve their money. So come with











The sword fighting was really fun to watch. These are metal swords and although they probably are not that sharp they can still do some damage as you can imagine, if they are not handled correctly. The players acted out a chess game in which the different sides would then fight over the space jointly occupied. Cleverly done and worth the effort to see. Put this on your calendar and don't miss it.





The shopping at the festival includes all manner of clothing and other sundries as well. I always love to see the creative attention that these vendors and sole proprietors put in their booths. It was wonderful to observe the amount of imagination that went into some of these stores.

I think there's something here for everyone. We certainly did not leave without buying something for ourselves, or our friends. Yes, they do take credit cards.









The address in question here was over \$800. Now, that seems pricey but a lot of these are custom handmade unique creations. As I mentioned earlier the customers come dressed for this festival. One of the places you can start and cheat your way to the top of the most photographed list, is to buy one of these outfits ready made. But, they have all manner and all types of dresses available for you to consider.







I couldn't help but note that this "customer" was sitting in front of a store in which he could easily buy supplies that he would need in our time, and his. He seemed happy enough for me to take his picture. But the shops litter the entire area and you should take your time and go into them. They offer some unique fare that you won't find anywhere else and are again focused and attuned to the Renaissance Period.







We came early. You may wanna change your mind once you see where the site is located as it is remote and behind a large municipal solid waste site (no, you cant see the trash from the road). It is also down a very bumpy dusty dirt Rd. But be patient hang in there and when you arrive there is a expanse of parking on a grass meadow. You will then walk to an entrance where you will show your ticket, or buy your entrance. Well worth your time. We spent the entire day and we'll go back again.

THE END