**List of price of medieval items**

Courtesy of Kenneth Hodges (hodges@jif.berkeley.edu)

The list of medieval prices which follows is by no means complete or thoroughly researched; I merely extracted references from some of the books I have, and I thought others might like to inspect it. The sources I used are listed at the end. If an item is listed several times, it is because I had several references I wished to record.

Money goes as follows:

1 pound (L) = 20 shillings (s)

1 crown = 5 shillings

1 shilling = 12 pence (d)

1 penny = 4 farthings

1 mark = 13s 4d

The French Livre, sou, and denier are equivalent to the pound, shilling and penny (Latin liber, solidus, and denarius).

For ease, I've divided this list into the following sections: tools, horses, food and livestock, books and education, buildings, cloth and clothing, armor, weapons, marriage, funerals, travel, miscellaneous goods, and wages.

Of course, a price list is a misleading guide to a feudal economy, because so many goods were either produced within a household, or supplied by a lord. Retainers could get money, but they would also get food, lodging, weapons (sometimes), and cloth. Knights Templar were provided with clothes, horses, and armor.

TOOLS

Item Price Date Source Page

2 yokes 4s c1350 [3] 170

Foot iron of plough 5d " " "

3 mason's tools (not named) 9d " " "

1 spade and shovel 3d 1457 " "

1 axe 5d " " "

1 augur 3d " " "

1 vise 13s 4d 1514 [5] 27-28

Large biciron 60s " " "

Small biciron 16s " " "

Anvil 20s " " "

Bellows 30s " " "

Hammers 8d-2s 8d " " "

2 chisels 8d " " "

Compete set of armorer's tools £13 16s 11d " " "

Spinning Wheel 10 d 1457 [3] 170

HORSES

Item Price Date Source Page

War Horse up to 50s 12 cen (?) [7] 30

War Horse up to £80 13 cen [3] 72

Knight's 2 horses £10 1374 " 76

High-grade riding horse £10 13th cen " 72

Draught horse 10s-20s 13th cen " "

Note: Horse prices varied dramatically; for instance, they doubled

between 1210 and 1310. ([3], p. 37).

FOOD AND LIVESTOCK

Item Price Date Source Page

Wine:

Best Gascon in London 4d/gallon 1331 [2] 194

Best Rhenish in London 8d/gallon " " "

Wine:

Cheapest 3d-4d/gal Late 13 cen [3] 62

Best 8d-10d/gal " " "

Ale (beer comes later):

Good 1.5d/gal 14 cen [2] 201

Medium 1d/gal " " "

Poor .75d/gal " " "

Ale:

First-rate 1-1.25d/gal 1320-1420 [3] 58

Second-rate .75-1d/gal " " "

Ale (best):

Somerset .75d 1338 [3] 210

London 1.25d " " "

Beer, good 1d/quart late 16 cen [8] xx

Dried Fruit (eg raisins, dates, 1-4d/lb, up

figs, prunes), almonds, rice to 6d rare 14 cen(?) [3] 62-63

Spices (cinnamon, cloves, mace,

pepper, sugar, etc). 1-3s/lb " " "

Pepper 4s/lb mid 13 cen [9] 218

Pepper 6d/.5lb 1279-1280 [3] 11

Saffron 12s-15s/lb 14 cen(?) [3] 62-63

Cow (good) 10s 12 cen(?) [7] 30

Cow 9s 5d mid 14th [1] 99

Cow 6s 1285-1290 [3] 206

Ox 13s 1.25d mid 14 cen [1] 99

Sheep 1s 5d " " "

Wether (castrated ram):

Somerset 9d-10d 1338 [3] 210

London 1s 5d " " "

Pig:

Somerset 2s 1338 [3] 210

London 3s " " "

Fowl 1d " " "

2 Chickens 1d 14 cen [4] 78

2 Dozen Eggs 1d " " "

Goose (in London) 6d (legal)

7d-8d asked 1375 [2] 198

80 lb cheese 3s 4d late 13 cen [3] 114

Salted herring (wholesale) 5-10/1d 1382 [2] 198-199

Salt conger 6d each 1422-1423 [3] 69

Oats:

Somerset 1s/quarter 1338 " 210

London 2s 2d per " " "

quarter

Cost of feeding a knight's or £30-£60, 15 cen [3] 199

merchants household per year up to £100

Related note: around 1380, these are the average costs per day of feeding

people on an estate ([3], p. 65): lord, 7d; esquire, 4d; yeoman, 3d; and

groom, 1d.

BOOKS AND EDUCATION

Item Price Date Source Page

Monastary School £2 (approx) 1392-1393 [3] 75

per year

Schoolmaster at Croyden:

Board 2s/week\* 1394 [2] 186

Instruction 13s 4d/year " " "

Oxford:

Board 104s/year 1374 " "

Clothing 40s/year " " "

Instruction 26s 8d/year " " "

University:

Minimum £2£L3/year Late 14 cen [3] 75

Student of good birth £4£L10/year " " "

Fencing Instruction 10s/month Late 16 cen [8] xx

7 Books £5 (approx) 1479 [3] 76

126 Books £113 1397 [3] 77

To Rent a book .5d-1d per mid 13 cen [9] 172

pecia\*\*

\* Source says 2s/day. This is not only insanely high, but the text also

claims that the board was the same as at Oxford--i.e., 2s/week or

104s/year.

\*\* A pecia is 16 columns of 62 lines of 32 letters, i.e., 31 744 letters,

or about 7 500 - 8 000 words. Rental period is not specified, but I

would guess a year; books were rented to be copied, and copying the Bible

took 15 months. See [9], p. 172.

BUILDINGS

Item Price Date Source Page

Rent per annum for 138 shops on

London Bridge £160 4s 1365 [2] 114

Rent for the three London

taverns with the exclusive

right to sell sweet wines

(hippocras, clarry, piments) £200 1365-1375 [2] 195-196

Rent cottage 5s/year 14 cen(?) [3] 208

Rent craftsman's house 20s/year " " "

Rent merchant's house £2£L3/year " " "

Cottage (1 bay, 2 storeys) £2 early 14 cen " 205

Row house in York (well built) up to £5 " " "

Craftsman's house (i.e., with

shop, work area, and room

for workers) with 2-3 bays

and tile roof £10£L15 early 14 cen [3] 205

Modest hall and chamber, not

including materials £12 1289 [3] 79-80

Merchant's house £33£L66 early 14 cen [3] 205

House with courtyard £90+ " " "

Goldsmiths' Hall (in London,

with hall, kitchen, buttery,

2 chambers) £136 1365 [2] 114

Large tiled barn £83 1309-1310 [3] 79

Wooden gatehouse (30' long),

barn, and drawbridge:

Contract £5 6s 8d + 1341 [3] 81

builder's

clothing

Estimated total £16 " " "

Stone Gatehouse (40' X 18'):

with all except stone £16 13s 4d 1313 [3] 79-80

estimated with stone £30 " " "

Tower in castle's curtain wall £333, L395 late 14 cen " "

Castle & college at Tattershall £450/annum 1434-1446 " 81

for 13 years

Transept of Gloucester Abbey £781 1368-1373 [3] 79-80

Stonework of church (125', no £113 13 cen(?) " "

tower) (contract)

note: tithes were often calculated at 1d a week for every 20s of annual

rent paid (4, p. 208).

The following are the estimates of raw materials and labor that went into

the tower of Langeais, a rectangular, tapering stone tower built in 992-

994. The source is [6], pp. 47ff. The dimensions at the base were 17.5

meters by 10 meters; the height was 16m (3 floors); the walls were 1.5m

thick, made of two shells filled with loose rock.

Limestone in building: about 1050 cubic meters, or 2 600 000 kg

Wood in building: 47.5 cubic meters, or 34 600 kg

Nails: 3 400, or 50 kg

Mortar: 350 cubic meters.

To make the mortar:

sand: 225 cubic meters, or 360 000 kg

limestone: 40 cubic meters, or 160 000 kg

green wood: 540 cubic meters, or 286 000 kg

Labor Costs, in Average Working Days (AWD):

procurement: 14 250

transport: 2 880

labor:

unskilled: 63 500

mason: 12 700

smith: 1 600

CLOTH AND CLOTHING

Item Price Date Source Page

Fashionable gown easily £10, late 14 cen [2] 53

up to £50

Gentry:

Shoes 4d 1470s [3] 79

Boots 6d " " "

Purse 1.5d " " "

Hat 10d, 1s 2d " " "

Craftsman's tabard and super-

tunic 3s 1285-1290 [3] 206

Reeve's murrey (dark brown) robe 6s 4d 1349-1352 " 176

Reeve's red robe 5s 3d " " "

Peasants (wealthy):

Linen Chemise 8d 1313 [3] 175

Shoes 6d " " "

Woolen garment 3s " " "

Fur-lined garments 6s 8d early 14 cen " "

Tunic 3s " " "

Linen 1s " " "

Landless serfs' tunics 1d-6d mid 14 cen " 176

Cloth for peasant tunics 8d-1s 3d early 14 cen " "

per yard

Best Wool 5s/yard 1380 [3] 78

"Tawny and russet" 6s/yard 1479-1482 " "

Silk 10s-12s 15 cen(?) " "

per yard

Furs added to garment +£2-£3 to 15 cen(?) " 79

garment

The worth of cloth provided

yearly by a lord to:

esquires 2s 11d/yard 1289-1290 [3] 78

yeomen 2s/yard " " "

lesser servants 1s 7d/yard " " "

Note: loose tunics take 2.25-2.5 yards. In the late 14th century,

shorter doubled (lined) tunics, known as doublets, became fashionable,

requiring 4 yards ([3], pp 175,176).

ARMOR

Item Price Date Source Page

Mail 100s 12 cen(?? [7] 30

Ready-made Milanese armor £8 6s 8d 1441 [4] 112

Squire's armor £5-£6 16s 8d " " "

Armor for Prince of Wales,

"gilt and graven" £340 1614 [5] 20

Complete Lance Armor £3 6s 8d 1590 [5] 185

Complete corselets 30s " " "

Cuirass of proof with pauldrons 40s " " "

Normal cuirass with pauldrons 26s 8d " " "

Target of proof 30s " " "

Morion 3s 4d " " "

Burgonet 4s " " "

Cuirass of pistol-proof with

pauldrons £1 6s 1624 [5] 189-190

Cuirass without pauldrons £1 " " "

Lance Armor £4 " " "

Targets of Proof 24s " " "

Cuirass with cap £4 " " "

Armor of proof £14 2s 8d 1667 " 68

Bascinet 13s 4d + 1369 " 88

3s 4d to

line it

Armor in a merchant's house

(leather?) 5s 1285-1290 [3] 206

Total Armor owned by a knight £16 6s 8d 1374 " 76

Armor in house of Thomas of

Woodstock, duke of Gloucester £103 1397 " 77

Fee for cleaning rust off

corselets 5d each 1567 [5] 80

Fee for varnishing, replacing

straps, and rivetting helmet

and corselet 1s 4d 1613 [5] 90

Barrel for cleaning mail 9d 1467 [5] 79

Note: mail is chainmail; almost all the rest is plate-armor. The armor of the knight in 1374 was probably mail with some plates; same for Gloucester's. Mail was extremely susceptible to rust, and was cleaned by rolling it in sand and vinegar in a barrel. Pauldrons are shoulder plates; morions are open helms, burgonets and bascinets closed helms; and a target refers to any of a number different kind of shields. Armor of proof is tested during the making with blows or shots from the strongest weapons of the time; if a weapon is listed, the armor does not claim to be proof against everything, only that it is proof up to that weapon's strength (eg pistol proof is not musket proof, but may be sword proof). All plate armor was lined with cloth, to pad the wearer, quiet the armor, and reduce wear between the pieces. This, along with the necessary straps, was a significant amount of the expense. An armorer asking for money to set up shop in 1624 estimated production costs and profit for a number of different types of armor: I give two examples below ([5], pp. 189-190).

Cuirass of proof with pauldrons:

plates: 5s 6d

finishing, rivets, and straps: 7s 6d

selling price 26s

Lance armor:

plates 14s 5d

finishing, et cetera 40s

selling price 80s

WEAPONS

Item Price Date Source Page

Cheap sword (peasant's) 6d 1340s [3] 174

Pair of wheel-lock pistols,

with tools for them £2 16s mid 17th [4] 208

Holsters for pistols 6d " " "

Wheel-lock carbine £1 10s " " "

Shoulder belt for carbine 1s " " "

Pair of flintlock pistols £2 5s " " "

Flintlock carbine £1 2s " " "

Musket 16s 6d-18s 6d " " "

Note: Sorry, folks, that's all I found. It was mandatory in England for all freemen to own certain types of weapons and armor. (In 1181 every freeman having goods worth 10 marks (1 mark = 13s 4d) had to have a mail shirt, a helmet, and a spear. All other freemen should have helmet, spear, and gambeson (quilted armor) [4], p. 39.) Later, the government stored arms and armour in churches for use; in the 13th century anyone with an income of £2-£5 (wealthy peasants) had to have bows; archery practice became compulsory on Sundays and holidays. You may know that the extreme range of the longbow was 400 yards, but did you know that a statute of Henry VIII no one over 24 could practice at a range of less than 220 yards? (See [4], p. 95 and elsewhere). Note: for guessing prices, see the section on tools (an axe for 5d). An armorer might make 24s a month; say a week to make a decent sword, and you might get a price that way. See the section on books and education for fencing instruction.

MARRIAGE

Item Price Date Source Page

Sample peasant dowries: 13s 4d, 14 cen(?) [3] 179

35s 11d,

57s, 63s 4d

For serfs, mechet (fees) to lord,

depending on wealth 1s-13s 4d 14 cen(?) [3] 179

Wedding feast, wealthy peasant 20s " " "

Wealthy peasant wedding total £3-£4 " " "

Dowry for esquire's daughter up to £66 15 cen " 84

13s 4d

Dowry for baron's daughter £1000 + " " "

London parents (both sets)

each offered couple £100 1385 [2] 154

Note: these costs will be wildly varying depending on circumstance.

FUNERALS

Item Price Date Source Page

Cheap gentlewoman's funeral

(bell-ringing, clergy, food) £7 1497 [3] 85

Brass monument, with a figure

incised, on marble base--

fitting for lesser aristocrat £8 early 14 cen " "

Bishop Mitford's funeral

(with 1450 guests!) £130+ 1407 " "

Memorial Chapel for Richard

Beauchamp, earl of Warwick £2481 1439-1463 " "

Bronze effigy on guilded tomb £400 " " "

Note: Christopher Dyer gives as a rough rule of thumb 1 year's income for

a funeral ([3], p. 85)

TRAVEL

Item Price Date Source Page

Queen's chariot £400 14 cen [1] 99

Lady Eleanor's chariot £1000 14 cen [1] 99

Chariot £8 1381 [3] 72

Chariot maintence 1-3s/year 14 cen " "

Barge £10 " " "

Iron-bound cart 4s c1350 " 170

Guide for a night 1d 14 cen [1] 129

Ferry ride per horseman 1d " " "

Keeping an earl's warhorse

82 days in summer 36s 9.5d 1287 [3] 71

Note: [1], pp 126-129, gives the following prices at an inn in 1331. For

one day, 3 men with 4 servants spent: Bread, 4d; beer, 2d; wine 1.25d;

meat, 5.5d; potage, .25d; candles, .25d; fuel, 2d; beds, 2d; fodder for

horses, 10d. The four servants staying alone sleep 2 nights for 1d.

Generally, all 7 spend 2d a night on beds; in London, it is 1d per head.

MISCELLANEOUS

Item Price Date Source Page

6 silver spoons 14s 1382 [2] 24

2 gold rings with diamonds £15 " " "

Gold Ring with ruby 26s 8d " " "

3 strings of pearls 70s " " "

6 gold necklaces 100s " " "

Fee to enroll an apprentice:

with mercers (cloth dealers) 2s 14 cen [2] 111

with carpenters 1s " " "

Fee to join guild at end of

apprenticeship:

with mercers 20s " [2] 111

with carpenters 3s 4d " " "

Fee to join guild 6s 8d-£3 14 cen(?) [3] 208

Fee to gain freedom of a town

(to enjoy its exemption from

feudal duties) 3s 4d-20s 14 cen(?) [3] 208

To empty a cesspit in a city 6s 8d 15 cen(?) [3] 209

Candles

Somerset 1.5d/lb 1338 [3] 210

London 2d-2.5d/lb " " "

Candles

tallow 1.5d/lb 15 cen(?) [3] 74

wax 6.5d/lb 1406-1407 " "

Vat 4d 1457 [3] 170

Barrel 3d " " "

Bottle 4d " " "

2 buckets 1s " " "

1 sheet 4d " " "

1 mattress 2d " " "

4 pillows 4d " " "

3 boards for a bed 4d " " "

2 sheets, 4 blankets 5s 8p 1349-1352 " "

16 bedspreads, 20 sheets,

8 featherbeds £3 1s 1285-1290 [3] 206

Duke's bed of cloth of gold,

with blue satin canopy £182 3s 1397 [3] 77

Table 6d 1457 [3] 170

Chair 3d " " "

Chest with necessaries thereto 2s 2d " " "

2 chests 6d each " " "

Metal ewer 6d 1349-1352 " "

Brass pot 2s " " "

Basin and ewer 8d " " "

Basin and ewer 2s 8d " " "

Towel 6d " " "

Coffer 1s " " "

2 stools 8d " " "

Ceramic cooking pot .5d 1340s " 174

Note: most of these come from inventories of peasants' belongings. The

fine goods would be more expensive.

Note about lighting: great houses could use 100 lb of wax and tallow in a

single winter night ([3], p. 74). Others, not as rich, would go to sleep

earlier.

WAGES

Profession Wage Date Source Page

Mercenaries:

knight banneret 4s/day 1316 [4] 78

knight 2s/day " " "

man-at-arms or squire 1s/day " " "

Regular Army

Esquires, constables, and

centenars 1s/day 1346 [4] 79

Mounted archers, armored

infantry, hobilars,

vintenars 6d/day " " "

Welsh vintenars 4d/day " " "

Archers 3d/day " " "

Welsh infantry 2d/day " " "

Captain 8s/day late 16 cen [4] 181

Lieutenant 4s/day " " "

Ensign 2s/day " " "

Drummer or trumpeter 20d/day " " "

cavalryman 18d/day " " "

infantry 8d/day " " "

Laborer £2/year max c1300 [3] 29

Crown revenues (at peace) £30 000 c1300 " "

Barons per year £200-500+ c1300 " "

Earls per year £400-£11000 c1300 " "

Sergeant at Law (top lawyer) £300/year 1455 " 47

Chief armorer 26s 8d/month 1544 [5] 182

Other armorers in same shop 24s/month 1544 " "

except "Old Martyn" who made 38s 10d/month 1544 " "

Apprentices in same shop 6d/day 1544 " "

Master mason 4d/day 1351 [2] 24

Master carpenter 3d/day " " "

Carpenters' Guild stipend to

a sick member 14d/week 1333 [2] 156

Weavers 5d/day, no 1407 [2] 146

food

Chantry priest per year £4 13s 4d 1379 [2] 24

Squires per annum 13s 4d-£1 14 cen [1] 116-117

Carters, porters, falconers 5s-8s 8d 14 cen [1] 116-117

grooms, messengers per year

Kitchen servants 2s-4s/year 14 cen [1] 116-117

Boys and pages 1s-6s/year 14 cen [1] 116-117

Wardens of London Bridges £10/year 1382 [2] 128

Note: sheriffs of London paid 300 £s per year, hoping to make a profit from

the fines they collected.

Note: 30 adult sheep could produce about 20s of wool per year in 1299

([3], p. 114).

Note: To get a VERY ROUGH sense of money, I reproduce the following chart

from Dyer ([3], p. 206). These are averages of daily wages in pence.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Decade | Thatcher | Thatcher's mate |
| 1261-70 | 2 | - |
| 1271-80 | 2.5 | 1 |
| 1281-90 | 2.25 | 1 |
| 1291-1300 | 2.5 | 1 |
| 1301-10 | 2.5 | 1 |
| 1311-20 | 3 | 1.25 |
| 1321-30 | 3 | 1 |
| 1331-40 | 3 | 1.25 |
| 1341-50 | 3 | 1.25 |
| 1351-60 | 3.5 | 2 |
| 1361-70 | 3.5 | 2 |
| 1371-80 | 4.25 | 2.5 |
| 1381-90 | 4 | 2.25 |
| 1391-1400 | 4.25 | 2.75 |
| 1401-10 | 4.5 | 3 |
| 1411-20 | 4.75 | 3 |
| 1421-30 | 4.5 | 3 |
| 1431-40 | 4.5 | 3.25 |
| 1441-50 | 5.25 | 4 |
| 1451-60 | 5.5 | 3.25 |
| 1461-70 | 4.75 | 3.75 |
| 1471-80 | 5.25 | 3.75 |
| 1481-90 | 6 | 3.75 |
| 1491-1500 | 5.5 | 3.5 |
| 1501-10 | 5.75 | 4 |
| 1511-20 | 5.25 | 4 |

[1] *English Wayfaring Life in the XIVth Century*, J. J. Jusserand, trans Lucy Smith, Putnam's Sons, New York,1931 (Orig. 1889).

[2] *London in the Age of Chaucer*, A. R. Myers, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1972

[3] *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages*, Christopher Dyer, Cambridge University Press, 1989

[4] *English Weapons & Warfare, 449-1660*, A. V. B. Norman and Don Pottinger, Barnes & Noble, 1992 (orig. 1966)

[5] *The Armourer and his Craft from the XIth to the XVIth Century*, Charles ffoulkes, Dover, 1988 (orig. 1912)

[6] "The Cost of Castle Building: The Case of the Tower at Langeais," Bernard Bachrach, in *The Medieval Castle: Romance and Reality*, ed. Kathryn Reyerson and Faye Powe, Kendall/Hunt, Dubuque, Iowa, 1984

[7] *The Knight in History*, Frances Gies, Harper & Row, New York, 1984

[8] *Methods and Practice of Elizabethan Swordplay*, Craig Turner and Tony Soper, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 1990

[9] *Life in a Medieval City*, Joseph and Frances Gies, Harper & Row, New York, 1969