

Henry VIII (reigned 1509-1547)



- Second son of Henry VII.
- Married: Catherine of Aragon (Spanish), Anne Boleyn (English), Jane Seymore (English), Anne of Cleves (Flemish-Belgian), Catherine Howard (English), Catherine Parr (English).
- Three children
- Buried in Windsor Castle.

Henry VIII is probably the most well-known of the Tudor kings. He was a very selfish person and by the end of his life everyone was afraid of him, mainly because of his ruthless behaviour toward anyone who didn't agree with him.



When was Henry born?

Henry VIII was born at Greenwich Palace, London on 28 June 1491 and was the second son of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York (daughter of Edward IV). He became Prince of Wales and heir to the throne on the death of his elder brother, Prince Arthur, in 1502.



When did Henry become king?

He succeeded to the throne after his father's death on 21 April 1509. He was 17 years old when he became king.

Henry built fine palaces, and fought wars against France and Scotland.



Appearance

Tall and thickset, with blue-grey eyes, short auburn hair and a beard.

Henry VIII was handsome in his youth, but became bloated and fat (he had a 54-inch waist when he was 50).

He dressed lavishly, wearing a gold collar with a diamond as big as a walnut and many jewelled rings.



Religion

Henry VIII brought religious upheaval to England. When he became king, most people belonged to the Catholic Church, which was headed by the Pope, in Rome. In 1534, Henry broke away from the Catholic Church and proclaimed himself head of the Church of England. The land and riches of the church became Henry's property and he sold off most of this land to dukes, barons and other noblemen.



Home

Henry VIII lived at Hampton Court Palace near London. He also had many other wonderful palaces around the country.



Family Life

Henry VIII wanted a son to rule after him. He first married his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon but divorced her when she did not produce a male heir to the throne. He married three times more before a son was born. In total he married six times!



How many children did Henry VIII have?

Henry VIII had three children - Mary (by Catherine of Aragon), Elizabeth (by Anne Boleyn) and Edward (by Jane Seymour). Each became a monarch - Edward VI, Mary I (or Mary Tudor) and Elizabeth I in that order.

His son, Edward VI ruled for six years after Henry's death, he became King at age 9 and died at age 15. Henry's daughter Mary ruled for the next five years, but also died without children. Finally, Henry's last surviving child, Elizabeth I became Queen, and ruled for 45 years.



Death

Henry died in St James's Palace, Westminster, around 2 am on Friday 28 January 1547, aged 55 years. His funeral procession to Windsor was four miles long. He was buried at Windsor Castle beside his third wife, Jane Seymour.



Important events during the reign of Henry Tudor (Henry VIII)

1. King Henry VIII, Henry's son, successfully united England and Wales under one system of government. The two countries were joined in 1536.
2. Henry VIII wanted a male heir, but his wife had not given birth to a son. Henry wanted to divorce her and take a new wife. The Roman Catholic Church refused to grant the divorce. In order to gain his divorce, Henry had to establish the Church of England and end Catholicism.
Henry passed a law in 1534 making himself head of the Church of England. This act allowed him to divorce his wife and led to the formation of the Protestant Church of England. The Protestant movement was known as the Reformation.



Fun Fact

During Henry VIII's thirty-eight year reign, he had more than 70,000 people executed. That works out as an average of just over five every day.