**Medieval Facts:**

Rule of thumb: one could not hit one’s wife with a stick thicker than a thumb.

Bathing was considered an occasion of sin, so not much of it took place. To hide body odor, brides carried a bouquet of flowers. Hence, the custom exists today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of using the nice clean water, then sons, daughters, wife, and finally the baby used the same water. By then the water was so dirty, one could actually lose someone in it. Therefore, the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."

Houses had thatched roofs - thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained, the roof became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip off the roof. Today we have the saying, "It's raining cats and dogs."

For serfs, warmth was afforded in their huts by bringing animals in on cold nights and huddling next to them. Hence, on a very cold night, it could be a “three dog night.”

For upper class people, in the bedroom, bugs and other droppings could mess up a nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

A medieval serf’s floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying "dirt poor."

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "upper crust."

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait to see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a "wake."

In reburying people, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and there was a realization that people had been buried alive. So Medieval people would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the "graveyard shift") to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be "saved by the bell" or was considered a "dead ringer."

The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they adding more thresh until when you opened the door it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entranceway. Hence the saying a "thresh hold."

Sometimes Medieval serfs or peasants could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could "bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and "chew the fat."