

MEDIEVAL JOBS: BARBER

Back in the medieval ages, a Barber (or Barber Surgeon) was the only person with the sharp instruments needed for a shave and trim. Because a Barber owned such sharp instruments, which were not so readily available, they also had to perform minor surgeries, dentistry (tooth extractions) and tasks such as bloodletting. Most were trained through apprenticeships, as long as seven years.

That person provided — in addition to haircuts, shaves, and cosmetic procedures — wound care, setting of broken bones, herbal remedies, dressings, bleeding and cupping. In 16th-century Germany, barber-surgeons began to specialize in tooth-pulling or cataracts. Operations were public entertainment, often at town and country fairs.

In addition to these procedures, these shops were centers of communication and information, and were probably the source of today's ideas about clients talking to their hairdressers about everything.

Adapted from:

Carnegie, Julie L. "Medieval Europe: 814–1350: Social Class System and the Economy." *UXL World Eras*, vol. 8: Medieval Europe: 814–1350, UXL, 2016, pp. 45-66. *Gale In Context: Middle School*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX3629700115/MSIC?u=mcps&sid=bookmark-MSIC&xid=688cf364. Accessed 9 Nov. 2021.