EUROPEAN MIDDLE AGES TIMELINE
500 A.D. – 1500 A.D.

The Middle Ages, the medieval period of European history between the fall of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the Renaissance, are sometimes referred to as the "Dark Ages."

CLIMATE, FLORA and FAUNA – Medieval towns and cities actually had a lot of ordinances and laws to do with waste disposal, latrines, and toilets. In medieval London, for example, people were responsible for the upkeep and cleanliness of the street outside their houses.

LANGUAGE, CULTURE and ART - The rise of organized religion, Catholic church and Islam, gave birth to the the Crusades which expanded trade routes to the East giving Europeans a taste for imported goods such as wine, olive oil and luxurious textiles. Craftsmen in monasteries created illuminated manuscripts: handmade sacred and secular books with colored illustrations, gold and silver lettering and other adornments.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION - Thanks to an expanded and improved food supply, populations grew and more and more people were drawn to towns and cities. By 1300, there were 15 cities in Europe with a population of more than 50,000. In these cities a new era called The Renaissance, a time of great intellectual and economic change, was born.

DIET and NUTRITION - In medieval Europe, rural life was governed by a system called "feudalism." In a feudal society, peasants known as serfs did most of the work on the large pieces of land called fiefs. They planted and harvested crops and gave most of the produce to the landowner who in turn sold it to nearby cities and towns. Improved and more efficient farming techniques led to hardier crops, larger harvests and a consistent quality food source for the population.

TECHNOLOGY – The Crusades began in 1095 and continued on and off until the end of the 15th century. Exposure to Islamic literature, science and technology would have a lasting effect on European intellectual life. Inventions such as the pinhole camera, soap, windmills, surgical instruments, an early flying machine and the system of numerals that we use today were introduced.

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