

Jason's Guide to Garb

October 2006

Well, you've had your first taste of what an event will be like and you're pretty certain you want to pursue Realms as a hobby. You've checked the SMAC calendar and you know that your first opportunity to go to an event is only a little over a week away, at the Black and White. And after getting a glimpse of how some of the veterans look in their garb, you've come to the determination that you want more than just your simple tunic to go to events in.

Well one answer to that is armor. We have a workshop set up for that in November, and there will be more discussion of that later on, but for now, here is some information and hints about getting yourselves some more garb.

We'll start with the internet, of course. Ordering things online lacks the flair of instant gratification, but there are a lot of great bargains out there. You will find a lot of websites that are specifically medieval clothiers, and they certainly make some very beautiful things, however as their market is relatively small, and they cannot deal in bulk, their prices are often very high.

If you're looking for bargains online, eBay is a sure bet: Go to eBay, and select clothing (men's or woman's would also be an appropriate selection) as a subcategory. In your search specify items between \$5 and \$20 (or whatever your budget is). You can then search for Tunic, Cloak, Gown, Garb, SCA, Medieval, Renaissance, and Pirate, among other things. There is a wealth of very nice items in that price range, and you can't ask for much better. Here are some samples I pulled up with the above criteria:



When you are searching for this stuff, don't restrict yourself to things that are specifically made to be garb. A lot of fashion trends in recent history, especially for women, have mirrored garb, and the realms is a very lax environment when it comes to historical authenticity. Vintage clothing that has a baggy appearance often works great.

You can, of course, search froogle for the same items and get some good results.

If you're not as pressed for cash, here are some commercial sites that deal in garb. These are all places I or friends of mine have dealt with.

- [Woolly Cat](http://www.woollycat.net/) (http://www.woollycat.net/)
- [Museum Replicas](http://www.museumreplicas.com/) (http://www.museumreplicas.com/)
- [Threads of Time](http://www.threadsoftime.com/) (http://www.threadsoftime.com/)
- [Grey Cat Designs](http://www.greycatdesigns.bigstep.com/) (http://www.greycatdesigns.bigstep.com/)
- [Pendragon Costumes](http://www.pendragoncostumes.com/) (http://www.pendragoncostumes.com/)

Now then, some of you may not want to buy online. Lucky for you there are a wealth of places just in your hometown where you can get some garb. Right now it's Halloween time, and some things that are out there as costumes are right down our alley. But some everyday items are out there too.

The Salvation Army/Goodwill - Remember that vintage clothing I was talking about? Well Salvals and Goodwill are great sources of it. Women especially will find shirts, skirts, and gowns that are very garb like. These places are also great for cheap leather belts, which are a must have for holding your tunics and tabards on. Old motorcycle boots are a great deal and work great for garb boots, and once in a while you can even get a good cloak. These are places to keep your eyes on.

Secondhand Stores - Any kind of consignment or thrift shop will have generally the same items as a Goodwill store, so check these too. Go to the ones near where rich people live for the best items.

T.J. Max - This is another great place for the ladies. Modern cloaks are virtually indistinguishable from some medieval cloak styles, and you can find some garb-like shirts here as well.

Payless Shoe Source - This is a big one right now, again, mostly for the ladies. There are a couple styles of really great looking garb boots in their line up right now. Garb boots are always easier for women than men, but make SURE you never get anything with big heels on it. They will destroy your ankles. You can usually get a good pair for \$30-\$40, which is a great deal for boots.

DSW - Again with the garb boots for the ladies and sometimes men.

Hot Topic - There are a lot of fake corset like items here for the ladies. I mention this place with apprehension as anything that comes from here looks tragically gothy. I regret to inform you that if you get anything made out of PVC I will never speak to you again. These will all be expensive, however.

Lingerie Stores- These places also have corsets for the ladies, and better ones than hot topic does. These will often be very expensive.

Wal*Mart - You can't get more mundane than Wal*Mart, but even they have some great items. Their Halloween section is in full bloom right now and I'm sure I've seen pirate shirts there. The normal clothing section could possibly hold some baggy tunic type items for the ladies. Long pajama pants work great for garb pants (for men and women), and you can easily put them over a pair of shorts that has pockets for your OOC items (that's what I do). The shoe section has some boots for the ladies, and once in a while some that are good for guys.

Halloween Seasonal Stores - They are all over the place right now in malls and plazas. Again, lots of garb shirts, pants, and cloaks appear as part of costumes. I have even seen real chainmail coifs in these places.

So now you're saying... "Great! But I don't have a car up here!". Well I do, and I would be happy to take people to the local Salvation Army, Payless Shoe Source, and Wal*Mart whenever you want to go. All you have to do is ask and we'll arrange something.

So there you go, a head-start on finding all the items you need to impress everyone with your look. Remember, it's not too early to tell your parents what you want for Christmas!

Good luck everyone, see you on the field.

Jason