

# WAY SURPRISING STUFF

## ● Did you know that pirates went to bed at 8 o'clock at night?

Pirate ships had strict rules and like a well-run machine, it had officers and a clear division of labor. Everyone did chores and knew what was expected. Punishment was severe for anyone caught lying or stealing, and if two pirates had a disagreement, they would have to wait to settle it on land.

Pirates were a raucous bunch, but to prevent fires on board the ship, all candles had to be put out by eight o'clock at night, so the pirates went to bed, unless they were on watch. Pirates did wear eye patches, not because they were missing an eye. Covering one eye helped them adjust quickly if they had to go from the brightness on deck to the darkness belowdecks to fire canons during a battle.

## ● Did you know pirates were well fed and well paid?

There were no fridges on pirate ships, so good food and a menu suitable for life at sea were important. At the beginning of the journey, the pirates enjoyed the freshest and tastiest food. Later they would eat cured meats and fermented vegetables (like pickles and beef jerky) and beans. These foods did not rot. Some animals, on board, provided the crew with milk, eggs, and, ultimately, fresh meat.

Pirates did not bury their treasure right away because they shared the loot first. A pirate's treasure was not always gold or silver and jewels; it could be food, lumber, cloth, and animal hides which were more useful on and off the ship. They also valued maps and were overjoyed when they stole an atlas from a Spanish galleon. It had precious navigational charts, and the directions to different places, like a pirate GPS.

## ● Did you know there were women pirates too?

Women pirates were extremely rare, but they did at times strap on a cutlass and a pistol and take to the sea. The most famous were Ann Bonny and Mary Read who were part of Calico Jack Rackham crew in 1719. These women dressed like men, and in battle they were quite fierce, if not more than the male pirates. When Rackham and his crew were captured, Bonny and Read announced that they were each expecting a baby. Because of their condition, they were not hanged along with the other pirates. Read died in prison a year later. Bonny was released, because of her father's influence. She returned to Charles Towne where she married, had children, and lived out the remainder of her life.