

THE SIX WIVES OF KING HENRY VIII

Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived!

Ready for a trip back in time? Here at **Nat Geo Kids**, we're travelling back to Tudor England in our **Henry VIII wives** feature. Hold onto your hats – and your heads!

Henry VIII wives...



1. Catherine of Aragon

Henry VIII's first wife was **Catherine of Aragon**, daughter of **King Ferdinand** and **Queen Isabella** of **Spain**. Eight years before her marriage to Henry in **1509**, Catherine was in fact married to Henry's older brother, **Arthur**, who died of sickness at just **15** years old. Together, Henry and Catherine had a daughter, **Mary** – but it was a *son* that Henry wanted. Frustrated that Catherine seemed unable to produce a male heir to the throne, Henry had their marriage annulled (cancelled) in **1533**. But there's more to the story – towards

the end of their marriage, Henry fell in love with one of Catherine's ladies-in-waiting (woman who assisted the queen) – **Anne Boleyn**...



2. Anne Boleyn

Anne Boleyn became Henry's second wife after the pair married secretly in **January 1533**. By this time, Anne was pregnant with her first child to Henry, and by **June 1533** she was crowned **Queen of England**. Together they had a daughter, Elizabeth – the future **Queen Elizabeth I**. But, still, it was a *son* – and future king of England – that Henry wanted. Frustrated, he believed his marriage was cursed and that Anne was to blame. And so, he turned his affections to one of Anne's ladies-in-waiting, **Jane Seymour**. And Anne's

fate? Following accusations of numerous crimes, including witchcraft and treason (plotting to kill the king), she was arrested and beheaded. Eek!



3. Jane Seymour

On **30 May 1535**, King Henry married **Jane Seymour**. Unlike his previous wives, however, Jane never had a coronation and so was never crowned Queen of England. Some people believe this was because Henry wanted her to provide an heir to the throne first. And in **October 1537**, the time had finally come – Henry became the proud father of **Prince Edward**. But the prince came at a price – Jane took ill and died just two weeks after the birth. She was buried in a tomb at **Windsor Castle**, and would later become the only one of

Henry's six wives to be buried with him.



4. Anne of Cleves

Henry was single for two years after Jane Seymour's death. But as time passed, the King and his ministers felt that England needed a foreign ally – and so the hunt for a new bride began! Henry sent a talented painter called **Hans Holbein** to Germany to paint portraits of the **Duke of Cleves'** daughters, **Anne** and **Amelia**. Anne's portrait pleased him, and arrangements were made for the pair to wed. But Anne's arrival in England proved to be a bit of a disaster to say the least. Seeing her in person, Henry took an instant dislike to Anne and, finding her ugly, referred to her as "The Mare of Flanders". Poor Anne! Too late to cancel, their wedding took place 6 January 1540, only for the marriage to be annulled a few weeks later.



5. Kathryn Howard

Next in line to marry King Henry VIII was young **Kathryn Howard** – lady-in-waiting to Anne of Cleves and first cousin to Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn. By the time they married in **July 1540**, Henry was 49 years old, overweight and unable to walk, and Kathryn a lively teenager. Delighted with his new wife, Henry is said to have spoilt Kathryn with gifts and called her his "rose without a thorn". But trouble lay ahead for Kathryn – two years into their marriage, she was accused of being unfaithful to the king. Her fate..?

Beheaded!



6. Catherine Parr

The last of Henry VIII wives was **Catherine Parr**. An educated woman who loved to learn new things, Catherine married Henry on **12 July 1543**. She proved to be a kind wife who looked after Henry in his sickness, and a good stepmother to the king's three children, Mary, Elizabeth and Edward. But yes – you guessed it – she didn't have it easy with Henry! Her interest in **Protestantism** (a new religious faith) made her enemies in court – enemies who tried to turn the king against her and have her arrested. Luckily for Catherine, she managed to convince Henry that she was loyal to him and his religion, and was spared execution. Phew! Henry died in **1547**, leaving Catherine widowed and free to marry her former love, Thomas Seymour.

748 words

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
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
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