

# First Class Life on the Titanic

The first class passengers on the *Titanic* were living in the lap of luxury. Some of the richest people in the world were traveling on the *Titanic* for her maiden voyage. This included prominent members of the upper-class that included politicians, businessmen, bankers, professional athletes, industrialists and high-ranking military personnel. Most of those on in first class were traveling with an entourage which might include one or all of the following: a nurse for the children, a maid, valet, cook, and chauffeur. A first class ticket ranged anywhere from thirty pounds to 870 pounds. In today's money you could expect to pay an average of \$70,000 per first class ticket. The more expensive rooms were a parlor suite and usually had a private promenade deck.



Everyone is familiar with the breathtaking Grand Staircase with the glass dome over it, but the *Titanic* had many other amenities, including electricity and the wireless Marconi system. Other amenities found on the First Class deck included a Parisian Café, A La Carte Restaurant, tea gardens, reception room, verandah café, heated swimming pool, gymnasium, library, squash court, barbershop, kennel, elevators, smoking room, Turkish bath, dining saloon, reading and writing rooms, and enclosed promenade decks to walk and sit on. Many first class passengers had their pets with them on the voyage {two dogs were saved}.

The *Titanic* sailed during the Edwardian Age where the food and wine flowed freely and people still dressed for dinner. On deck a bugler will signal the dinner hour had arrived. A meal was an experience and not something to be rushed through. All first class meals provided numerous options to choose from. Lunch seemed to be more laid back with either a buffet or a special request from the grill. In the book "*Last Dinner on the Titanic*" the author provides menus for meals that consist of ten to fourteen courses. A first class menu was found after the sinking for Sunday, April 14, 1912 {the night of the disaster}. The menu for that evening consisted of the following: the first course consisted of an hors d'oeuvres; second course had a selection of soups; third course was a poached salmon; fourth course consisted of filet mignon with vegetables; fifth course gave you a choice of lamb, duck or beef with more vegetables; sixth course was a punch to clean the palate; seventh course was a roast squab, ninth course was a pate and the tenth course consisted of deserts such as pudding, fruit, ice cream, etc. Different wines were served with each course and following the last course fresh fruit and cheeses

were available. The men would then excuse themselves to retire to the smoking room for coffee, cigars and their desired spirits.



People of this era knew nothing but a life of opulence and grandeur. There were those few that had planned to be on the *Titanic* but had to cancel at the last minute for various reasons. A few of these were J.P Morgan and Milton Hershey. Ironically Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt I cancelled his trip on the *Titanic* at the last minute, but died in the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915 {the ship *Titanic* was built to rival}.

## Second Class Life on the Titanic

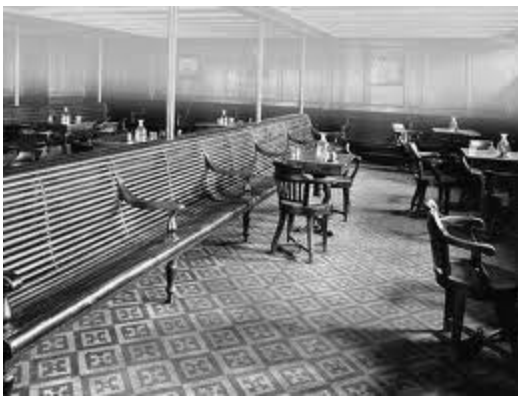
The second class passengers on the *Titanic* were what we would consider today to be the middle class. The travelers in second class consisted of professors, authors, clergymen, and tourist. Many of these passengers would have traveled as first class on other vessels. A second class ticket at that time cost approximately 13 to 79 pounds, which would be the equivalent of \$1800 today.

The entrance to the Second Class dining room was nowhere as beautiful and magnificent as the well know First Class Grand Staircase. The second class passengers did have a library and smoke room in addition to their dining hall.

In contrast to the Ten Courses First Class Passengers had for dinner, Second Class Passengers only enjoyed three courses. The first course would consist of soup, the second course was the main meal, and the third course were the desserts which were followed by coffee.

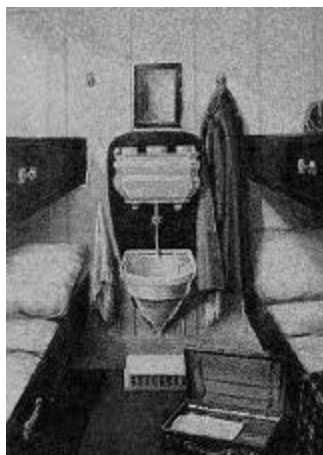
# Third Class Life on the Titanic

Third class passengers were in the steerage. They were primarily immigrants moving to the United States and Canada for a better life. Third class consisted of diverse groups of nationalities and ethnic groups, although the largest number of passengers were British, Irish or Scandinavian. Other countries represented included Finland, Sweden, Bulgaria, Croatia, Russia, Lebanon, Syria and Hong Kong. Passengers ranged from those traveling alone, to single moms traveling with their children {most were going to join their husbands who were already settled in their new homeland} to large family groups.



A third class ticket ranged from seven to forty pounds, which would be approximately \$700 today. Children's tickets were three pounds {about \$300 today}. Depending on their port of departure, some tickets also included the price for rail travel.

I was surprised in my research to discover that third class had automatic flushing toilets, while first class did not. The reason being most *"third class passengers were unfamiliar with indoor plumbing and may not remember {or understand} the need to flush the toilets themselves"*.



Third class life was a lot simpler than what the first and second class passengers were enjoying. Third class passengers had a simple berth which was shared with other passengers, along with a smoking room and general room.

Third class passengers had to make their own fun. Children would have played on deck and as represented in the popular 1997 film, it is very possible that an impromptu dance took place.

Meals on the *Titanic* were very simple for the Third Class, but succulent compared to what



these passengers might be familiar with on land. Third class only had one course that was served. The menu found for the night of the sinking consisted of soup, roasted pork, two or three vegetables, pudding and biscuits. Looking at the menu it seems this is the noontime meal {compared to the large meals being in the evening for the **First Class** and **Second Class**}. Third class

would enjoy tea in the midafternoon with beef and biscuits. Later in the evening coffee was served with a soup and some biscuits.

Before boarding the vessel Third Class Passengers were given a health inspection to check for disease, lice and other infectious infections. The gates were present but they were there to prevent the third class from spreading disease to the upper classes.

Third class was the group hardest hit by the disaster and experiencing the greatest loss of life. The reasons for this are numerous, including but not limited to: first and second class given more importance, many did not understand the true magnitude of the disaster right after the collision with the *Titanic*, at least some of the third class gates remained locked, and many of the passengers that were non-English speaking did not understand.