

## Eleanor of Provence



Born: 1223 Provence, FRA

Married: King Henry III of England

Died: 26 Jun 1291 Amesbury, ENG

Parents: Ramon Berenguer IV & Beatrice of Savoy

Eleanor of Provence (c. 1223 – 26 June 1291) was Queen Consort of King Henry III of England.

Born in Aix-en-Provence, she was the daughter of Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Provence (1198-1245) and Beatrice of Savoy (1206-1266), the daughter of Tomasso, Count of Savoy and his second wife Marguerite of Geneva. All four of their daughters became queens. Like her mother, grandmother, and sisters, Eleanor was renowned for her beauty. Eleanor was probably born in 1223; Matthew Paris describes her as being "jamque duodennem" (presently twelve) when she arrived in the Kingdom of England for her marriage.

Eleanor was married to Henry III, King of England (1207-1272) on January 14, 1236. She had never seen him prior to the wedding at Canterbury Cathedral and had never set foot in his impoverished kingdom. Edmund Rich, Archbishop of Canterbury, officiated. Eleanor and Henry had five children:

Edward I (1239-1307)

Margaret of England (born 1240), married King Alexander III of Scotland

Beatrice of England (1242 - 1275), married John II, Duke of Brittany

Edmund Crouchback, 1st Earl of Lancaster (1245-1296)

Katharine (born 1253-May 3, 1257)

Eleanor seems to have been especially devoted to her eldest son, Edward; when he was deathly ill in 1246, she stayed with him at the abbey at Beaulieu for three weeks, long past the time allowed by monastic rules. It was due to her influence that King Henry granted the duchy of Gascony to Edward in 1249. Her youngest child, Katharine, seems to have had a degenerative disease that rendered her mute. When she died aged four, both her royal parents suffered overwhelming grief.

She was a confident consort to Henry, but she brought in her retinue a large number of cousins, "the Savoyards," and her influence with the King and her unpopularity with the English barons created friction during Henry's reign. Eleanor was devoted to her husband's cause, stoutly contested Simon de Montfort, raising troops in France for Henry's cause. On July 13, 1263, she was sailing down the Thames on a barge when her barge was attacked by citizens of London. In fear for her life, Eleanor was rescued by Thomas FitzThomas, the mayor of London, and took refuge at the bishop of London's home.

In 1272 Henry died, and her son Edward, 33 years old, became Edward I, King of England. She stayed on in England as Dowager Queen, and raised several of her grandchildren -- Edward's son Henry and daughter Eleanor, and Beatrice's son John. When her grandson Henry died in her care in 1274, Eleanor mourned him and his heart was buried at the priory at Guildford she founded in his memory. Eleanor retired to a convent but remained in touch with her son and her sister, Marguerite.

Eleanor died in 1291 in Amesbury, England