



(Arggggggh! - What pirates say whilst pillaging and plundering, to show that they are really serious and that this is not just a weekend hobby. It can also mean that someone is about to get wild- a.k.a. a battle cry.)

No part of the legend of pirating is more romanticized than the solemn "pirate's code". Truth is, there wasn't such a thing, other than a loose set of Maritime laws that informed the privateers, buccaneers and scoundrels that plied the waves in fast ships. But, it was very common for the captain of a ship to set his own code, a set of rules called "articles" that governed everyone and everything on a ship. The importance of articles was simple, follow them or suffer the consequences – flogging, surrendering a hand or leg, death (hanging and walking the plank were favorite methods) or marooning. So listen up ye swabs! Here be the Articles of Ferquan the Pirate. Make yer mark or be off!

Dead Men Tell No Tales (Standard pirate excuse for leaving no survivors.) The first rule of pirating! But, let's be clear - we don't actually kill people these days. In fact, the modern-day version of this ancient pirate law is **"What happens afloat, stays afloat. Aaargghh!** C'mon, mateys. You KNOW you don't want your escapades shared with the landlubbers at home and work. You know you don't want to be explaining your fun to disapproving glares around the family dinner table at Thanksgiving. Be cool. Be fair. Be discreet. *"Put a plug 'n yer blowhole!"* (Keep your mouth shut! and that goes double for digital photos!!)

Living Well Is The BEST Revenge!! Everyone knows that revenge is as much a part of pirate history as peg legs and the Jolly Roger. But times have changed. We no longer sack the town and hang the Governor from the main sail. Burning ships is so ... yesterday. Naw, the type of revenge we seek is the kind that comes from basking in balmy, glorious fun and luxury while those who wish you ill are slaving away at their oars. *For the sweet trade, we are!* Life's pretty good, and why wouldn't it be? We're pirates, after all!

Don't Get "Bilged By Your Own Anchor" – Sometimes the crew wouldn't be paying attention as they hoisted the anchor and it would knock a hole in the bow of the ship.

Whoa! Now, that sucks a-mighty. While out there pirating about, take care of yourself. Don't be stupid, be aware and savvy. A good pirate knows better than to be "*hoisted by his own petard*". (This includes overdoing the grog, single-handedly supporting the casino or recklessly defying the Sun Gods.)

Go "on account". Every normal man must be tempted, at times, to spit on his hands, hoist the black flag, and begin slitting throats (metaphorically, at least). The average man will bristle if you say his father was dishonest, but he will brag a little if he discovers that his great-grandfather was a pirate. In the time-honored pirate traditions, a man would "go on account" when he signed the Captain's Articles and pledged his allegiance to the ship and crew. Once done, he was entitled to his fair share of any booty and was expected to give it all in the battle. The point of going on account is to declare your commitment to the freedom of pirating and finance your freedom with "plunder". Make it work for you! Don't do anything illegal! Anyone can steal or defraud, but it takes dedication and style to plunder. Ay, ye Brethren of the Coast, step lively and make yer mark!

Life Is Not A Game You Win, It's A Game You Play. Begad, ye swabs! What bilge are ye listenin' to? Nobody wins this game, we all die in the end!! Aayy! It's all about how you play it. Are you proud and free, roaming the globe on the deck of your ship? (*i.e., your music, art, adventure, or whatever passion is yours*). Or are you shackled and bowed by the ropes of some dastardly lubber (*i.e., job, mortgage, other people's expectations, etc.*)? Soon enough, you'll swallow the anchor, and when you do, what will the high points have been?

Assemble A Crew. A lonely pirate is a poor pirate indeed. Gather like-minded folk to share your adventures and support your endeavors. Get people to give you pirating stuff and share the secrets of buried treasure (*aka, spectacular sunsets, nifty beach-front pubs, the best cruise deals, etc.*) Live with a swagger, respect your fellow pirates and share the wealth. Remember, merchant and pirate were for a long period one and the same person. Even today mercantile morality is really nothing but a refinement of piratical morality (*just look at the oil companies!*). Fellow crew-members are all around, just hoist yer flag and see who shows up. And remember, if you can't trust a pirate, you can't trust anyone!

Forego The Shanghais and Kidnappin'. Being a pirate is a matter of choice, and throwing one's lot in with a carousing group of buccanners and party-mongers is a decision one may well live to regret (in a fun way, of course). So, offer the path to many, embrace those who "*mark the articles*", but expect few and judge none. Beside, who wants to be baby-sitting a queasy spirit when there's so much PLUNDER to be had?!

Honor The Rum (or other piratical spirits). The Romans had their wine, the plains peoples had their cactus juice (aka tequila), and the pirates had their rum. Rum was such a central element of pirate life that it was considered bad form to maroon a man without a fair supply of the "good staff", even when the marooning itself was a punishment for violating the articles. Certain historical pirate legends, like Captain Henry Morgan (the guy who is the namesake of "Captain Morgan's Rum") were actually tea-totallers, but they knew their crews would disparage their pirate blood if they didn't imbibe the hearty grog. So, "*splice the mainbrace!*" (pick your poison and slug it down in raucous merriment with

your mates). Yes, some people will suggest the merits of moderation in the drinking area, BUT THEY'RE OBVIOUSLY NOT PIRATES!

Chivalry, Honor and Bravery. Virtually all pirate codes made it a major offense to “meddle with a prudent woman without her consent”, punishable by death. Of course, our ancestral namesakes had a nasty habit of ignoring the punishment in the case of ransacking and plundering, but we're more, uh ... civilized. Since we don't ransack and plunder (other than at the buffet table or the open bar), we extend the article to include any person who doesn't want to be meddled with, in any way. Furthermore, it is a matter of honor to stand up for victims of such meddling, and protect them from cowardly privateers and mauraunders. Don't hurt any part of anyone else, excepting their pride. (It is allowed to humiliate Non-pirates in the course of our pirating, but that's the limit). Alright, boys and girls, play nice!

Banish The Crimps, Scallywags, Hornswaglers and Lead Swingers. The way our fore-pirates measured the depth of water as they approached shore was by dropping a rope with a heavy piece of lead into the water (“swing the lead”). The job's lack of skill and effort gave rise to using it as term to describe slackers. Likewise, sea dogs had little use for swindlers, cheats or theives of any kind (‘ceptin’ when they was being them things in the service of their vessel, of course.) Each pirate was expected to carry his weight all the time and keep his “pieces” (cutlass, daggers and pistol) in good working condition. Failure to do so resulted in the slacker being banished or marooned and denied his share of the loot. Usually, before being cast away, the offender was forced to “Kiss The Gunner's Daughter” - a punishment of being bent over one of the ship's cannons and flogged. Stay clear of the flotsum and jetsum whilst plying yer pirate trade. If'n a fellow sea dog can't carry his own duffle, he ain't no sea dog! Steer clear.

Suffer The Mate's Yoke Gladly. The Golden Age of Pirates was dominated by such renowned and notorious figures as Edward “Blackbeard” Teach, Calico Jack Rackham and Bartholemew “Black Bart” Roberts (whose reputation was loosley immortalized in the movie “The Princess Bride”). In October, 1720, during a furious 3-day campaign of chasing down and boarding some fifteen French and English ships off the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, Black Bart captured the British frigate *Greyhound*, whose chief mate, James Skyrme, joined the pirates. As a “scupper” (low-level pirate) he endured the typical ridicule and harrassment (i.e. “the yoke”) that novice sea dogs were subjected to, but he persevered and made good. He would later become captain of one of Black Bart's ships, the *Ranger*. So, open yer deadlights ye swabs! Aay, ye be a good pirate and the booty will follow.

All Who Wander Are Not Lost. Ay, many of the lubbers around you will shake their heads and wonder why you don't “grow up” or “get a real job”. Belay that bilge! Surely hard work MUST have killed someone, even if nobody wants to admit it. The fate of *Gentlemen (and Women) of Fortune* is to explore the various coastlines, ports and deep holes of the Caribbean. Trust me, when you're “dancing with Jack Ketch” (*lying on your deathbed contemplating your life*) you probably aren't going to be saying “Gee, I wish I'd spent more time at the office”. But you may very well lament the fact that you never scrunched your toes in cool white sand whilst scuppered on a fiesty caulker of grog.