



The Top 5 Most Famous Queens: Nefertiti, Cleopatra, Elizabeth I, Catherine the Great, and Queen Victoria

Charles River Editors

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Includes pictures.

Includes bibliographies of each queen for further reading.

*Includes a table of contents.

In the early 20th century, over 3,000 years after her death, Nefertiti became a household name across the world and one of the most famous women of the ancient world. Egyptologists were aware that she was a queen of the New Kingdom Egypt during the later portion of the 18th dynasty, but she was little known until the presentation of a reconstructed bust depicting her at the Berlin Museum in 1924. Nefertiti means "the beautiful one has come", and if the presented bust is anything to judge by she, was indeed a beautiful woman.

Cleopatra was a captivating figure even to contemporary Romans and the ancient world, and she was a controversial figure who was equally reviled and praised through the years, depicted as a benevolent ruler and an evil seductress, sometimes at the same time. Over 2,000 years after her death, everything about Cleopatra continues to fascinate people around the world, from her lineage as a Ptolemaic pharaoh, her physical features, the manner in which she seduced Caesar, her departure during the Battle of Actium, and her famous suicide. And despite being one of the most famous figures in history, there is still much mystery surrounding her, leading historians and archaeologists scouring Alexandria, Egypt for clues about her life and the whereabouts of her royal palace and tomb.

As one of the most famous women rulers in history, Russian Empress Catherine the Great has long been remembered not only as one of the most powerful women of her time, but she was also one of the most powerful and capable rulers in all of Europe. And her path to the throne was just as remarkable as her reign. Despite the strong-arm tactics, Catherine came to power in the midst of the Enlightenment, which was flourishing in France and Britain, and she would rule as an Enlightened ruler. A known correspondent of Voltaire's, Catherine sought to modernize Russia and turn it into a force in its own right, creating a rich and cultured court at the same time. Over the course of nearly 35 years in power, Catherine ushered in the Russian Enlightenment and presided over a period of time known as the Golden Age of the Russian Empire. When Queen Elizabeth II came to the throne in 1952, many commentators heralded the beginning of her reign as the second Elizabethan age. The first one, of course, concerned the reign of Henry VIII's second surviving daughter and middle surviving child, Queen Elizabeth I, one of England's most famous and influential rulers. It was an age when the arts, commerce and trade flourished. It was the epoch of gallantry and great, enduring literature. It was also an age of wars and military conflicts in which men were the primary drivers and women often were pawns.

Elizabeth I still wielded great power in the 16th century, whereas Victoria was a constitutional monarch with limited power over the workings of the British government. But in a way, that made Victoria even more unique, as she still proved able to mold the cultural identity of a nearly 65 year long epoch. Furthermore, Victoria established some of the ceremonial customs of the British monarch and became both the forerunner and role model of subsequent queens, a legacy that continues to endure with her great-great granddaughter, Queen Elizabeth II.

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Priscilla Garcia:

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