

What's in the pot?

Magazine of the Lochac Cooks Guild

Guild Journal #3 December 2025

From the Guild Administrator

It's December... where has the year gone? Is anyone else wondering? Is everyone looking forward to the holiday season?

If you observe it, how is the Christmas shopping going? Is anyone else tearing apart their house trying to find the star cutters in order to make tiny chickpea crackers to decorate the increasingly elaborate savoury croquembouche they're planning for Christmas lunch?

Or is that just me?

But speaking of gift giving, it's a great time of year to ask for books to add to your library. I've put together a list of my Top Ten recommendations for books you should have in your SCA cooking library. There is a range from the beginner, to the technical, to the scholarly, and I've tried to keep away from books that have people contemplating flogging a kidney to afford.

Regardless of your plans and observances over the holiday season, I hope everyone has a relaxing and rejuvenating time, and see you all next year. (And now I'm off to check some more cupboards for those star cutters.)

Mistress Leoba of Lecelade

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*Salamander-shaped bread for
Southron Gaard's recent
Fabulous Beasts feast,
by Lady Ellen of Wyteley*

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The No Burnt Food Cooking Crew

By Lady Batista de Bardi

The fun of period cooking

River Haven had people to run events but we needed cooks. So I started No Burnt Food Cooking Crew (NBFCC), as somewhere for people to learn to cook period food.

This dream started with the help of our mentor, Mistress Eleanor of Caithness, and support from Baron Dimitrii and Baroness Josselyn of River Haven.

NBFCC has members from both the Brisbane baronies and we cook to learn and eat for fun.

We gather on the third Friday of each month and cook together. Then at 7pm we have a pot luck meal that everyone is welcome to attend. Everyone is welcome at NBFCC and those who do not wish to cook period food can simply bring a contribution.

We eat very well and have many laughs.

We have a Facebook Messenger group chat where we keep in contact with each other. We have submitted a badge to the heralds.



German mustard eggs with asparagus salad

NBFCC is a chapter (or local branch) of the Cooks Guild. If you'd like to have your own local chapter, please contact Mistress Leoba, the Guild Administrator.



First anniversary for NBFCC



Portuguese love cake

Our efforts

Scattered through this article are some of the items we've cooked or prepared at NBFCC nights.



My own experience

I never thought I would enjoy cooking period food as much as I do but having great support people makes things so much easier.

I have learnt patience towards the food and the members. I have found out that I am really good at "sauces" and everything needs a sauce on the side.

I have had my flops and was devastated, but it is all a learning and I did better the next time.

I find myself reading recipe books and thinking "wow this sounds really good". I have a four recipe books of my own, two gifted to me and two I purchased myself. Not a huge collection, but it's mine and I cook from them and have FUN.

I hope to cook my second small feast next year and even though it is small it will be MIGHTY for me and it is all a learning tool for the future.

Working together

One of our non-cooking members made the excellent suggestion that, instead of our regular cooks guild night, we do a pre-cook for the Coronation event in River Haven (November 2025). We enjoyed working together on something specific, and it was great support for the barony.

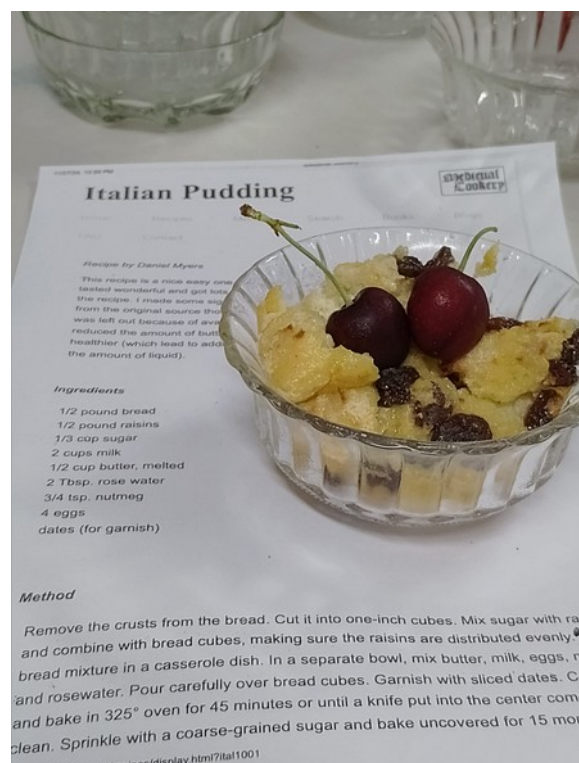
Guild rankings

We use the Cooks Guild [categories](#) to encourage a broad range of recipes.

Some people like to track their work through the [guild rankings](#) system. Each month, after we've eaten, three people fill in the forms for each individual dish. We give these to Mistress Eleanor as the local coordinator, who passes them on to the Guild.

Try it!

Next time you are thinking about cooking a feast please remember the NBFCC story, and consider having your own chapter. Smile and give it a go!!



Italian pudding

Recent Feast: White Rose 2025

By Master Cristoval

This event was in Okewaite, at Marulan Community Hall which is about halfway between Canberra and Sydney. It was the first visit of our new Baron and Baroness, Llewellyn and Rosa.

The event was themed on one of the episodes of the Wars of the Roses, where an English king was crowned in Dublin. The menu was intended to be a plausible menu for a 1487 feast, from 15th and 16th century sources.

Menu	
COURSE THE FIRST	
Roast beef	*
Pork pie	**
Green sauce of herbs	*
Aliper garlic sauce	
Mustard sauce	*
Neeps in verjuice - carrot, turnip, radish, cabbage	*
Porray - silverbeet, beans, celery, red onion	*
COURSE THE SECOND	
Chicken and prune pies	**
Fish with egurdouce (sweet and sour) sauce	*
Mushroom fritters	*
Heraldic marchpane biscuits	*
COURSE THE THIRD	
Honey tarts	**
Almond rose biscuits	*
Welsh shortbread biscuits	
Marzipan roses	*
* Gluten-free	
** Gluten-free version available	
There are alternative dishes for stated vegetarians.	

Kitchen

The hall has an unusually good kitchen, with the usual issues that the roasting pans could not quite be made to fit in the oven. There is an extra little hall off the kitchen, which was fabulous.

Dishes

For this feast I wanted to do roast beef. We don't often do it, for cost reasons. The roast was sent out to the tables to carve.

With the help of Ragnar of Adora, who now lives more-or-less in Okewaite, I made some oval chopping boards to fit in regular silver trays. Ragnar was my kitchen hand on the night too, and he's fantastic.



The pork pies were very large, each made in two stacked cake tins taped together. The pastry was a hot water crust, made with 'Supafry' because lard has disappeared from the shelves in the last year. It worked fine, but has a very short working time.



Having three very different sauces meant you could try them with each of the meat dishes. The green sauce was cold and fresh, the garlic sauce was hot and quite strong, and the mustard sauce

was my usual cheat of dijon mustard mixed with white wine vinegar.

The vegetable dishes worked fine, and the radishes came out as lovely pink globes. Generally people don't eat much of the vegies as they want to save room for the fancier and sweeter dishes.

The pies were adapted from a recipe, "To stue a capon", from *A Book of Cookrye* (1591). Often I use supermarket barbeque chickens in my pies for price and ease, but this one was boiled in pretty clear stock per the original recipe, with prunes a key ingredient along with some onion and celery.

Early English recipes often have dried fruit. I wanted the prunes to be the hero here, so I just added those and some currants.

To stue a Capon. Take the best of the Broth of the pot, and put it in a pipkin, and put to it Corance and great raisins, Dates quartered and onions fine minced, strayed bread & time, and let them boile well together: when they be well boyled, put in your prunes, season it with cloves, mace, pepper and very little Salte, a spoonfull or two of Vergious, and let it not be too thick. And your Capon being boyled in a pot by it selfe in fair water & salt to keepe it faire, and thus you may boyle a Chicken, vele, beef or mutton after this sort.

The sauce was thickened with bread per the original recipe; usually I use flour or rice flour as a thickener, but bread was more common at this time. The pastry was my standard in-a-blender shortcrust pastry, designed for standard Aldi quantities like much of what I do!



The fish dish was Egurdouce of Fysh (see insert), This was perhaps the most popular dish of the feast, though the mushroom fritters in beer batter were also particularly popular.



The marchpane biscuits were assembled from different coloured marchpane then baked, with contrasting food paint over the top. The heraldic charges were made with stamps, and some worked better than others – the food paint got me through.



Cristoval has a blog at FoodForTheFeast.com.

The desserts included a honey custard tart with a sun motif in spices applied by stencil (worked pretty well).



There were almond rosewater biscuits, using up the eggwhites left over from the tarts.

There were roses made from home-made marzipan, using a mould. I used orangewater in the recipe rather than rose, to distinguish them.

There were Aberffraw shortbread biscuits ("said to be Britain's oldest biscuit") made with mead in a scallop shell shape. I used half wholemeal flour, and might wind it back further next time.



The menu was well received. The challenge with these early English menus is that all the recipes are mushy things with dried fruit and the same spices. I feel that I achieved a pretty diverse menu which is a good fit for the time and place.

Egurdouce

This dish is fried fish in a sweet-and-sour sauce. It seems to have been done first with fish, then with other meats because it's pretty yummy. It's common in 14th and 15th century English cooking manuscripts.

My reference recipe was in Arundel MS 334 (c1425):

Take loches or rochys, tenches or soles, cut hom on peces, and frie hom ; then take half wyn, and half vynegur, and raisynges of corance, and sugur, and onyons, mynced and fried ; and do therto clowes, and maces, and gode powder, and sethe hit, and poure on the fyssh, and serve hit forthe.

Or in modern spelling:

Take loaches or roaches, tenches or soles, cut them in pieces and fry them. Then take half wine and half vinegar, and currants and sugar and onions, minced and fried, and add cloves and maces and good [savory spice] powder, and boil it, and pour on the fish, and serve it forth.

The first three are freshwater or estuary fish, and soles are a shoreline fish. We can't get them in Australia, so I use the local Aldi-fish which comes in two types that both work.

I cut the fish in pieces and floured them. In truth it's because my grandfather did it (deliciously) that way, and actually flour is never mentioned in any of these English recipes.

They do it with flour in a Dutch recipe from 1510 and in the Transylvanian Court Cookbook which has heaps of great recipes in it. For the record, I used GF flour with salt and pepper, ginger and tumeric. Tumeric is an outlier in England – see my article on [saffron substitutes](#) in the Herb and Garden Guild magazine.

The sauce was made beforehand, heated up before serving and spooned over the fried fish. I made a brown sugar syrup, with chopped sultanas rather than currants. For good powder, I added pepper and ginger and a little anise, as well as the ground cloves and ground mace, and adjusted to taste. It was very tasty with the fish.

Food-based Competition Entries

By Mistress Ysabeau Chanteuse

"Learning never exhausts the mind"

- Leonardo da Vinci

While I was assisting Mistress Kiriell du Papillon with judging the Arts & Sciences competition at a recent Politarchopolis event, she said this: "It's so exciting to have a food entry!"

That phrase resonated with me, and that's why I suggested to Cristoval that perhaps the Cooks' Guild newsletter could contain a regular column about food based competition entries. He likes the idea so much that he's given me the job of starting it off!

What events are happening in your area, what are the A&S competition themes, and how can you thrill the judges' tastebuds?

Autumn Crown competitions

Autumn Crown (Mordenvale, 28 Feb 2026) has the usual three options of something specific, a technique and a 'persona hook' for time, place and culture.

For this event the options are: Byzantium, glass and buttons.

Byzantium

A quick Google search tells me that *De Observatione Ciborum*, written by the Byzantine physician Anthimus in the 6th century, collects not only dietetic advice and information about foods, but also some interesting recipes (Historic Italian Cooking, n.d.).

I encourage you to take a look and consider an entry.

Glass

The A&S judges are willing to interpret the topic broadly.

In the past Mistress Monique de la Maison Rouge and Mistress Gertrud von Ritzebüttel have made amazing edible structures with sugar glass windows.

What could you do with sugar work?

Buttons

Buttons are a bit more of a challenge, but I reckon a case could be made for something using button mushrooms?

Or perhaps this is another subtletie option, such as an assortment of edible buttons.

See what you can come up with!

Competitions generally

How can we as a Guild encourage more food based entries in competitions?

Do you have some documentation from a food based competition entry, or photos of such, that could be included in a future edition of this newsletter?

Is there an event coming up in your group that needs a food based A&S competition?

An example

To start your creative juices flowing and ensure that your minds are never exhausted, the next article is from me about my first ever attempt at sugar paste, for my entry in the A&S competition at Spring Crown in Torlyon in AS LIX.

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Sugar Paste Shells

By Mestrez Ysabeau Chanteuse

Some years ago, I was prompted by a Kingdom Arts & Sciences competition to explore using sugar paste.

History of sugar paste

For an extensive history of sugar paste, I recommend reading the Sugar Paste post on Thomas de Courcy's blog (<https://www.bakerspeel.com/sugar-paste/>).

The early stages of sugar paste (otherwise known as sugar plate or rolled fondant) developed in England as early as 1558. The recipe included rosewater, sugar, lemon juice, egg white, and gum tragacanth, then called gum dragon. This vegetable compound is still used in commercial rolled fondant today. De Courcy (2016) provides the following information regarding sugar paste recipes in English:

Sugar paste recipes in English go back to at least 1558 when Alessio's Secreti (1555) was translated into English. Recipes originating in English start appearing in 1567.

Most of the recipes for sugar paste come out after the 1590s. This is both because of an increase in the number of cookery books but may also reflect the increased accessibility and decreased cost of two of the key ingredients (gum tragacanth and sugar) due to the signing of the Anglo-Ottoman commercial treaty in the late 1580s and the creation of the Levant Company, an English trading company focused on trade with the Ottoman Empire (Amatullah 2015). Although sugar was being grown by several nations at this time, including several European countries, the sugar from the Ottoman Empire was considered to be the best quality along with that produced by the Portuguese (Roufs and Roufs, 2014, 112).

History of the scallop shell

The scallop shell is the most well-known and iconic symbol associated with the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route, appearing in the Codex Calixtinus - a manuscript compiled between 1138 and 1173 (Follow the Camino, 2021).

Construction of the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral began in 1075. The cathedral, which is

the final destination of the Camino de Santiago, presents an impressive collection of sculptures, carvings, and reliefs. The scallop shell has a prominent presence in many of these works of art, either as a standalone decoration or integrated into the composition of the pieces.

Sugar paste experiment

Mistress Gertrud von Ritzebüttelru graciously provided me with her recipe for sugar paste, and her scallop shell moulds. The recipe is the 1595 version from Alessio's *Secreti*, referenced by De Courcy.

To make a paste of Suger, whereof a man may make al manner of fruities, and other fine thinges with their forme, as Plates, Dishes, Cuppes, and such like thinges wherewith you may furnish a Table.

Take Gumme and dragant as much as you wil, and steep it in Rosewater til it be mollified, and for foure ounces of suger take of it the bigness of a beane, the iuyce of Lemons, a walnut shel ful, and a little of the white of an eg. But you must first take the gumme, and beat it so much with a pestell in a brasen mortar, till it be come like water, then put to it the iuyce with the white of an egge, incorporating al these wel together, this don take foure ounces of fine white suger wel beaten to powder, and cast it into ye mortar by a litle and little, vntil they be turned into ye form of paste, thē take it out of the said mortar, and bray it vpon the powder of suger, as it were meale or flower, vntill it be like soft paste, to the end you may turn it, and fashion it which way you wil. When you haue brought your paste to this fourme spread it abroad vpō great or smal leaves as you shall thinke it good, and so shal you form or make what things you wil, as is aforesaid, with such fine knackes as may serve a Table taking heede there stand no hotte thing nigh it. At the ende of the Banket they may eat all, and breake the Platters Dishes, Glasses Cuppes, and all other things, for this paste is very delicate and sauerous. If you will make a Tarte of Almondes stamped with suger and Rosewater of like sorte that Marchpaines be made of, this shal you laye between two pastes of such vessels or fruits or some other things as you thinke good.

Redaction

Mistress Gertrud's redaction:

- 500g icing sugar
- 1 heaped tsp gum Tragacanth
- 1 Tab Rose Water
- 2 Tab lemon juice
- ½ egg white

Add the gum tragacanth to the rose water and let soak for 2 hours.

Sift the icing sugar to remove any lumps. Add the gum tragacanth and start to mix with your fingers, add the lemon juice and egg white to bring the sugar paste together into a firm smooth dough.

Wrap the dough in plastic wrap, breaking off enough dough to make each plate as you make it so the dough doesn't dry out.

Wrap some plates in plastic to use as the mould for the sugar plate. The sugar plate is moulded over the bottom side of the normal plate.

Roll out the dough to approx. 2mm thick. It needs to be thick enough not to break when food is put on it but thin enough to be eaten without breaking the guest's teeth.

Lay the sugar paste over your mould pressing down so the dough takes on the shape of the plate

Trim the edges, so the plate is neat and tidy.

Set the plate aside until the sugar dough has set sufficiently for the dough to hold the shape by itself, at that stage the sugar plate can be removed from the normal plate (which can be reused for another sugar plate).

Leave the finished sugar plate on a flat dry surface until it is completely dry (can take up to 24 hours) before decorating and storing.

Experiments

I was a little confused by the ½ an egg white, until I made my first batch and discovered how much paste is produced. Goodness me that lump of paste goes a long way when rolled out to 2mm thick!

As this was a 'try it out' batch, I made many different shaped objects from the sugar paste. I applied Mistress Gertrud's recommendations about plates to a bowl, a plate, and two eggshells. The eggshells, some balls and bunch of grapes were

dried in the dehydrator, and everything else was air dried.

As is to be expected from a first attempt, there were multiple failures and a few successes. The bowl and plate were abject failures; the apples turned into boobs; the bunch of grapes fell apart, and the turtle lost all its appendages (and would break the teeth of anyone attempting to eat it).

The eggshells were generally successful, though fragile. A sugar loaf, artichoke, some rolled snails and of course the balls survived the drying process. (A couple of snails lost their tails though.)

Construction

The second batch of sugar paste was devoted to two eggshells, many scallop shells, some discs on which to paint snails, and (just for fun) two fried eggs. Because why not.

Mistress Gertrud's scallop shell moulds produced an excellent result, as did her helpful hint to dust the moulds with cornflour before placing the sugar paste.

I used gluten-free cornflour, so that as many people as possible could taste the shells. I ran out of cornflour with a little sugar paste left, and can confirm that dusting the moulds with icing sugar does not produce a satisfactory result.

On the first tray of shells, I trimmed the edges of the sugar paste hard up against the shell pattern, and on the next tray I left the edges alone. I am still unsure which provides the better result.

This batch was air-dried for three days before being packed away, to await painting. The shells all came away easily from the baking paper that they had been resting on.

Decorating

Mistress Monique de la Maison Rouge kindly provided me with her equipment and some general instructions on decorating sugar paste. The important take-away from the discussion was to start with the lightest colour and gradually add the darker colours, and to paint from the base of the shell to the top.

I used my least successful shells in the practice decoration stages. The plan was to decorate four shells at once, so that I could compare the various stages. This meant that if I felt that step four was a step too far, I could fall back on step three.

The first pass uses lustre dusts. First coat was white, second coat was light gold, third coat was gold and fourth coat was golden bronze. While this makes for a very sparkly result, it wasn't what I was looking for. On to the food safe paint!



Gel paints are diluted with vodka. I rapidly learned that gloves would have been useful in this process, but it turns out that cleaning your hands with vodka also works.

First pass on the paints: the orange-copper spectrum. An error – I took the paint all the way to the edge of the shells, instead of creating smaller and smaller layers of the bolder colours. So these shells don't look very realistic.



The second pass on the scallop shells was based in the brown-bronze range. Again, I went from a light base to darker shades of brown, and this time I remembered to create the shading of the smaller layers. I decided after three different shades that this was the result I wanted to use for the final product.



Reflection

Working with sugar paste has been a very interesting learning experience. As always, I enjoyed the pre-practical reading, and the physical creation stages of this project. I surprised myself by enjoying the painting process.

While I'm absolutely confident that with more time and more experience I can create better sugar paste items, I am proud of what I have produced in this attempt. The process of trialling different colours, and remembering about moving from full coverage of the scallop shell with the palest shade, to smaller and smaller sections with the darker shades has created something that looks reasonably realistic.

I think what I have really learned is that just like in writing and cooking, this and probably most other artistic endeavours also require a drafting process. That's significant learning for me, as I have to work hard to overcome my perfectionistic tendencies to discard something I don't get 'right' the first time.

As I tell my students, I must apply to myself: mistakes are how we learn. Let failures and mistakes help us be creative, learn and grow.

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Compost

By THL Bjorn Bassason

The original name for the dish is "compost", though the meaning of that word has changed dramatically to the present day.



In Middle English, <compost(e)> referred to "a mixture of stewed fruit and/or vegetables; in compost, stewed or preserved" (*Michigan Library*, n.d.) or even simply "a stew", from Old Northern French <compost>, meaning a "composition", whether a mixture of leaves, manure, etc. for fertilising land (as with the modern English meaning) or a condiment.

The term comes originally from Latin <compositus>, meaning "composed". <compost> is a doublet with the French <compote> and <composite> which were both borrowed into English. (*Wikimedia Foundation*, n.d.)

Original Recipe

Take rote of persel, of pasternak, of rafens, scrape hem and waische him clene. Take rapes & caboches, ypared and ycorue. Take an erthen panne with clene water & set it on the fire; cast all thise therinne. Whan they both boiled cast therto peeres & perboile hem wel. Take alle thise thynges vp & lat it kele on a faire cloth. Do therto salt; whan it is colde, do hit in a vessel; take vyneger &

powdour & safroun & do therto, & lat alle thise thynges lye therein at night, other al day. Take wyne greke & hony clarified togider; take lumbarde mustard & raisouns coraunce, al hoole, & grynde powdour of canel, powdour douce & aneys hole, & fenell seed. Take alle thise thynges & cast togyder in a pot of erthe, & take thereof whan thou wilt & serue forth.

Source: *The Forme of Cury*

Translation

Pickled Salad. Take parsley, carrots, radishes; scrape and clean them. Take white radishes & cabbages, pared and cored. Take an earthen pan with clean water & set it on the fire; and put all these in. When they've boiled, add pears and parboil well. Take all these things out and let cool on a clean cloth. Add salt. When cooled, place in a container; add vinegar, powder, and saffron, and let sit overnight. Take Greek wine & honey, clarified together; take "lumbarde" mustard and whole currants, and cinnamon, "powdour douce" & whole anise seed, & fennel seed. Take all these things and place together in an earthen pot, and take from it when you need to, and serve.

Source: *Gode Cookery* (Matterer)

Notes

This can be made **months** in advance if preferred. If the vinegar-wine mixture is added hot as the recipe calls for, and the jar has a pressure seal, the pickle should be successfully canned. At this acidity, canning this pickle could very well make it shelf stable for years.

I made this dish for the 2024 AGM of the College of St Crispin (Newcastle University Medieval Society). It had a very popular reception, and it's quite cheap and simple to make.

The recipe made a lot of pickle, so I had plenty left over. I served it for the first remove of St Crispin's Day AS LIX (2024) alongside pork sausages, honey-glazed chicken, cheeses, dried fruit and nuts, bread and butter.

As of November AS LX (2025), I still have a jar of the pickle. I've organised for the College to view a selection of medieval texts in the University of Newcastle Special Collections, curated by the university Archivist. Afterwards, I will serve the compost alongside a ham and tart de bry for lunch.

Redaction

This redaction is given by the *British Museum* (2020), referencing *Curye on Inglysch*, IV. 103, where the original recipe can be found in print.

Ingredients:

- 900g mixed parsley roots, carrots, radishes and turnips
- 450g white cabbage
- 450g hard eating pears
- 6 tbsp salt
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp dried saffron strands
- 425mL white wine vinegar
- 50g currants
- 575mL fruity white wine
- 6 tbsp clear honey
- 1 tsp French mustard
- ⅛ tsp each of ground cinnamon and black pepper
- ¼ tsp each of anise and fennel seeds
- 50g white sugar

Method:

1. Wash and peel the root vegetables and slice them thinly. Core and shred the cabbage.
2. Put the vegetables into a large pan of water and slowly bring to the boil.
3. Peel, core and cut up the pears and add them to the pan. Cook until they start to soften.
4. Drain the contents of the pan and spread in a 5cm layer in a shallow non-metallic dish.
5. Sprinkle with the salt, ginger, saffron and 4 tbsp of the vinegar. Leave, covered, for 12 hours.

6. Rinse well, then add the currants.
7. Pack into sterilised storage jars, with at least 2.5cm headspace.
8. Put the wine and honey in a pan. Bring to simmering point and skim.
9. Add the rest of the vinegar and all the remaining spices and sugar.
10. Reduce the heat and stir without boiling until the sugar dissolves.
11. Bring back to the boil.
12. Pour over the vegetables, covering them with 1cm of liquid.
13. Cover with vinegar-proof seals and store.



Ingredients sprinkled with and left to sit on a non-metallic dish (step 5). In this case, a cleaned and sanitised large plastic storage container lid.

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What's the weirdest thing you've been served?

Crowdsourced from the Lochac chat pages

Many thanks for the tales of daring dishes. Some of the stories related to sotelties; we'll keep them for another edition.

This is to celebrate all the cooks who've done something daring, to challenge your diners and get them talking.

I did my best on SCA names, groups and dates, but the Facebook format doesn't facilitate that.

Rare and expensive

There were a few very rare and expensive ingredients. Mistress Rowan's exotic dish was swordfish in a spicy fruit sauce, part of a Transylvanian feast in Polit (May 2018). She served tiny 'tasting' portions as part of the first course. She said there were many requests for more!

Callum Macleod mentioned a "Guess the Meat" feast featuring venison, goat, thar and chamois. Apparently it was pretty good.

Baroness Eleanora served peacock at the Southron Gaard 20th anniversary; it is best to be young. She made a beautiful leather bird's head and kept the tail feathers to decorate it with.

Mistress Alys Dietsch of Okewaite has served older peacocks poached in milk and honey ("douce ame") and other ways.

Kangaroo

This is neither rare nor expensive in Australia, and pretty tasty if you cook it quickly and lightly. Various groups have used it as a good venison substitute, and it has been used instead of camel in Ynys Fawr (boggles the mind!).

Apparently kangaroo comes into its own for cooking A&S classes, because you never get to try the venison recipes otherwise.

Just weird

Pickled ox tongue has been served in Adora, snails in Okewaite, and Baron Lachlan served stargazy pie (the one with fish heads) in Aneala.

Fish generally seems to have invited some brave cooking. Mistress Antonia and Mistress Taddea made innkeeper's escabache for Canterbury Faire, fish preserved in jelly. They started with "gelee of fysche" from *Forme of Cury*, and experimented. Attempts to extract gelatine from fish bones were smelly and generally unsuccessful. They ended up with a red wine jelly around white fish: the dishes came back either untouched or scraped completely clean.

A ridiculous fish

This may have been the dish that Duchess Yolande remembered as "fish in beer", with the qualifier that she might have been hallucinating.

Mistress Leoba served this at Rhythm n Brews in 2018. A mashup of three recipes from *Ein Buch von Guter Spise*, two of which were clearly crazy fish dishes for sotelties, one where a pastry wrapped fish with chicken feet and pig's trotters was served, and the other where a fish poached in frogs' burps, a maiden's sigh and beer was dressed with feathers before serving. The third dish was actually a very nice pastry wrapped baked fish.

I wasn't going to include sotelties in this article, but frogs' burps are not a regular ingredient in Lochac and the baked fish does count. I'll pay Yoland's hallucination.



Cockerel Lollipops

By Mistress Thomasina Coke

The properties of sugar have always held a special appeal for me. My interest began in childhood, when I watched boiled sweets and fairy floss being crafted before my eyes. The transformation of simple ingredients into colourful, intricate confectionery was mesmerising.

As I grew older and joined the SCA, this childhood fascination took on new meaning. Discovering historical references to sugar and its uses was a truly wondrous experience.

It opened a world that connected me with others who share a passion for this simple, yet remarkably complex, ingredient. Together, we explore the unique qualities and versatile nature of sugar, finding joy in its history and properties. I am constantly learning, trying different techniques and recipes.

Crown Tournament

For the September Crown Tournament AS60, I decided to contribute cockerel lollipops to the victory feast.

Making these has been on my to-do list for quite some time, and the Turkish theme of the event provided the perfect opportunity to finally bring this idea to life.

The process combined my ongoing fascination with historical confectionery and sugar work, allowing me to share a traditional treat that aligns perfectly with the occasion's cultural motif.

I found evidence of the lollipops and other animals, birds, trees, fruits etc sculpted or cast from sugar, in *Sherbert & Spice: The complete story of Turkish sweets and desserts* by Mary Işın. (ISBN 978 1 84885 898 5) and an article *Moulds for Shaping and Decorating Food in Turkey* by Priscilla Mary Işın.

Another use of moulds is to make hollow lollipops known as horoz şekerı ('cockerel sweets'), since the cockerel is the most popular shape. These double moulds are mainly in the shape of various animals, with some exceptions such as train locomotives, pistols and baskets.

The oldest reference to these animal shaped lollipops is by the early 16th century

Turkish writer Lâtîfî, who in 1525 described sugar models of elephants, horses, partridges and vultures being sold in the streets of Istanbul (Lâtîfî 1977: 54; Işın 2013: 53).

The oldest illustration dates from the middle of the 17th century and shows a street seller with his lollipops ingeniously displayed by inserting the sticks into holes in a bottle gourd attached to a stick. These lollipops were in the form of birds and flowers on sticks in the form of green leafy stems that lend them a naturalistic appearance.

Traditionally these cockerel lollipops often incorporated sugar whistles, which are moulded separately and then attached to the lollipop, so that they double as toys, as emphasised in the poem *Childhood* by Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı (1910-1956):

*I counted out my coins to Affan Dede
He sold me my childhood
Now I have neither age nor name;
I don't know who I am.
No one should ask me a question;
I know nothing about what goes on.
This spring day, this garden:
Water splashing in the pool.
My kite high above the clouds
My marbles shiny and bright
My splendidly spinning hoop;
I wish my cockerel lollipop would never end!*

This type of lollipop was known in England but was far more popular until very recently in the United States (see www.timberlakecandies.com/from_dnt.html).

Presumably they were known in other countries, although I have not yet come across any references to them as yet.

In the early 17th century Sir Hugh Plat describes making hollow sugar fruits in plaster moulds by the rather eccentric method of swinging them up and down to make the sugar form a coating around the inside (Plat 1609: recipe 44).

In 1865 the English confectionery Henry Weatherly describes the method used in Turkey for 'Boiled Sugars in Moulds' made with cast iron moulds 'of all shapes' (Weatherly 1865: 56) and in 1881

another English confectioner E. Skuse gives a more detailed description of what he calls 'Boiled-Sugar Figures' in the form of 'all kinds of figures, such as dogs, cats, elephants etc.' (Skuse 1881: 82).

While traditionally these cockerel lollipops are made to be hollow, I confess that I am not at that level of expertise. I decided to make them solid and to keep to the tradition of the cockerels being red and not flavoured.

The recipe I used is my favourite modern recipe from *The Art of the Confectioner: Sugarwork and Pastillage* by Ewald Notter and Joe Brooks, as it is a stable recipe.

I can only make five at a time so I had to halve the recipe, and I used some round silicone moulds (because I was aiming to make about 160 and yes, I have been told I am crazy).



Sugar for moulding recipe

250ml water
500g sugar
100g glucose
2-4 drops of red food colouring (add more of you want a stronger colour)

Method

On a marble slab with a Silpat on top of that, I placed the oiled metal cockerel mould, standing it up.

Combine the glucose, sugar and water in the saucepan (I have a small copper one, pricey but worth it for even heat distribution).

Bring to a boil over medium-low heat. If crystals start to form on the side of the pan, brush them away with the pastry brush dipped in cold water.

Boil WITHOUT STIRRING until the mixture reaches the hard-crack stage (150°C on the candy thermometer.)

As soon as the hard-crack stage is reached, put the pan into a sink of cold water to stop cooking for 1 minute (I found I didn't have to do this part).

Stir in the food colouring and gently pour into the moulds. Let the bubbles settle and add a little more if necessary. Gently push in lollipop sticks into the moulds.

Let the mixture cool for about 20 minutes and gently release the side clips from the mould and remove the lollipops.

Let them go cold and wrap them in clear plastic sweet bags.



Watch this boy make them with ease. I suspect he has made them a lot!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFQIHNDzL1A>

My Top Ten Cooking Books

By Mistress Leoba

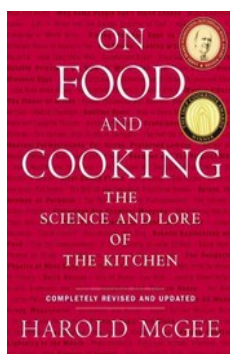
For a last-minute christmas book order, for yourself or a loved one, these are all books worth having in your cooking library.

1. On Food and Cooking

Harold McGee

Cook books tell you the how. This book will tell you the what and the why (or why not).

If you are going to get really serious about redacting recipes, knowing the science behind food and cooking methods is essential.



If you want to know how pastry works, this book will tell you.

If you're wondering why your bread doesn't rise, this book will tell you. If you want to know why beef fillet is great for frying but terrible for roasting, this book will tell you.

2. The Cook's Apprentice, OR

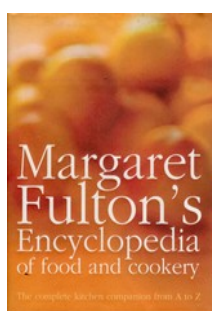
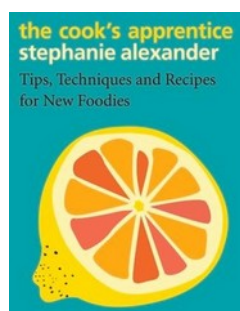
Stephanie Alexander

3. Encyclopedia of Food and Cookery

Margaret Fulton

It's great to have at least one book that gives you a source of cooking fundamentals, such as recipes, techniques and ingredients.

Either of these books, written by two giants of the Australian food scene, will be great additions to your library.



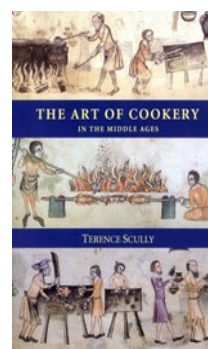
4. Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages

Terence Scully

Scully is a professor of French medieval literature who loves food and cooking; this led him to look at medieval French cooking and manuscripts, and from there medieval cookery in general.

This book is a very good overview of European medieval cooking, including agriculture, food merchants and cookery for different classes.

Scully has also translated several medieval cooking manuscripts from France and Italy.



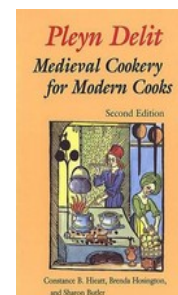
5. Pleyen Delit

Constance Hieatt et al

As Terence Scully is a professor of French medieval literature, Constance Hieatt was a professor of English medieval literature who loved cooking.

Pleyen Delit is a collection of recipes that resulted of her experiments with medieval cooking, mostly English, but some French. It's a great book to start with, as it will give you recipes to follow to help guide you through English medieval cookery.

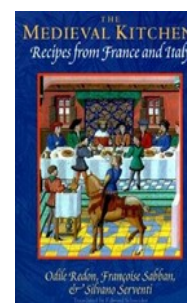
Hieatt also translated just about every English medieval manuscript that was about cooking.



6. The Medieval Kitchen

Odile Redon et al

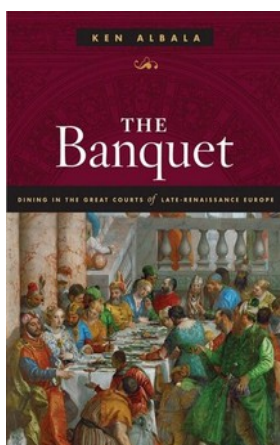
Like Pleyen Delit, this is a collection of modern versions of medieval recipes, though more French and Italian. It's another great place to start with your medieval cooking adventure.



7. The Banquet

Ken Albala

This is much more of a scholarly work, but Ken Albala has a very engaging, absorbing writing style. He is one of the people that has really made food history a serious field of academic study, for which we should all be really, really thankful.



He's very active on Facebook and will accept Friend Requests from anyone who looks to be interested in food history.

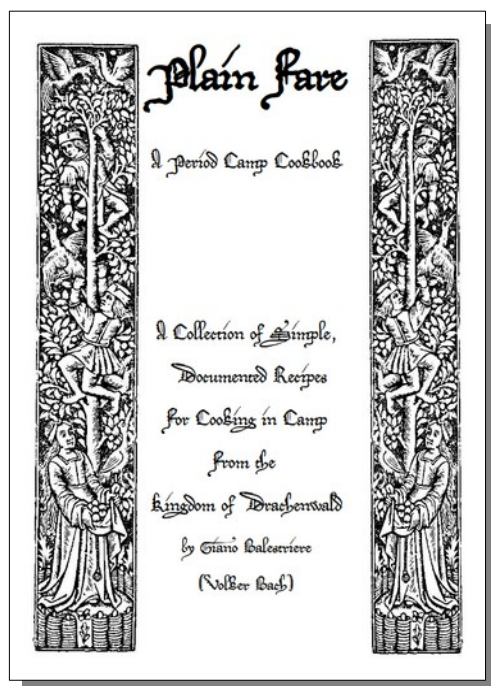
The Banquet is an examination of medieval feasting culture, focussed primarily on Italian culture, but drawing on traditions and practices from all of Europe. A must for anyone who wants to get serious about running spectacular feasts

8. Plain Fare

Volker Bach

<https://www.culina-vetus.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/PLAIN-FARE.pdf>

(You haven't downloaded this yet??)



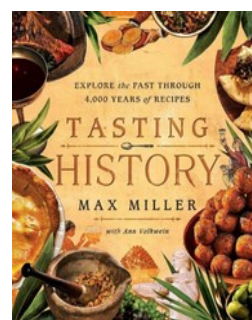
As Terence Scully and Constance Hieatt have done for French and English medieval cooking manuscripts, Volker Bach is doing for German medieval cooking manuscripts – translating them and explaining them in English. If you've seen the translations and discussions of German recipes online, they're from Volker. And... he's a SCAdian!

Plain Fare is a collection of recipes collated specifically for cooking in a camp setting.

9. Tasting History

Max Miller

Most people are familiar with Max Miller's "Tasting History" YouTube channel – one of the few good things that came from the COVID pandemic.



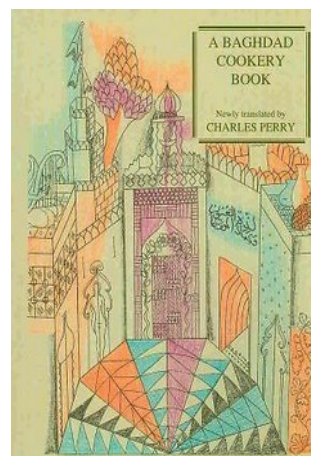
Tasting History is the cookbook Max wrote to accompany his videos. While not all recipes are relevant to the SCA, Max's recipes are clearly written and easy to follow, with decent historical notes. He definitely makes food history fun.

10. A Baghdad Cookery Book

Charles Perry

If you want to get into the wonderful world of Arabic medieval cookery, this book is a good place to start.

It's an English translation of a cookbook from 13th century Baghdad, with accompanying notes and a glossary of food terms.



Stirring the Pot

Thoughts from the Chronicler

Hey, a third issue. We're almost a fixture now, and people have told me they look forward to it.

I was delighted to read about the No Burnt Food Cooking Crew. That's a great innovation for the guild. A permanent chapter is a fantastic resource for a group, or an eight-week program would also have benefits. I hope all groups think about how they can encourage more participation in SCA cooking.

Master Cristoval
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Cristoval and some pork on a spit, Okewaite encampment, Rowany Festival, a few years ago
(The pork is closer to the camera.)