

What's in the pot?

Magazine of the Lochac Cooks Guild

Guild Journal #5 April 2026

From the Guild Administrator

liiiiiit'ssssss.....

TWO WEEKS UNTIL FESTIVAL!

While everyone is running around trying to find their gear, prep for food, finish making garb and wincing at the long list they made after last Festival, don't forget to take a breather every so often and rest. And why not read the rest of this newsletter, too?

This issue features the menu from the recent March Crown, hosted by Mordenvale, and an in depth discussion of the legendary Politarhopolis Good Food Feast, from the conception of the event, through the planning stages, to its execution. This was a very complex but well loved event, and if you want to improve your feast planning this would be a great event to look at.

And there's also fun with sotelties. These creations are a great way to have a bit of fun at events and give everyone a laugh. I will be running a class on sotelties on Thursday, and there are a few other food related classes, including how to be inclusive of dietary requirements in feasts. And the Guild will be meeting on Sunday!

Hope to see everyone there!

Mistress Leoba of Lecelade

Contents

2. March Crown Tourney 2026
3. Sotelties (crowdsourced)
6. The Good Food Feast 2015
10. Fritters
12. A&S Food Entries – Byzantium
13. Apotki and Apáki
14. Stirring the Pot



Soteltie of a refectory knife, for a Rowany Yule Feast, by Victoria Thrakesina. She made 17 of these, to get one that could be safely handled. Not convinced it was used to chop up the boar's head, though!

Contacts

Website: cooks.lochac.sca.org

Facebook: SCA Lochac Cooks Guild

Articles: Please send to the Chronicler at rhysh@iinet.net.au.

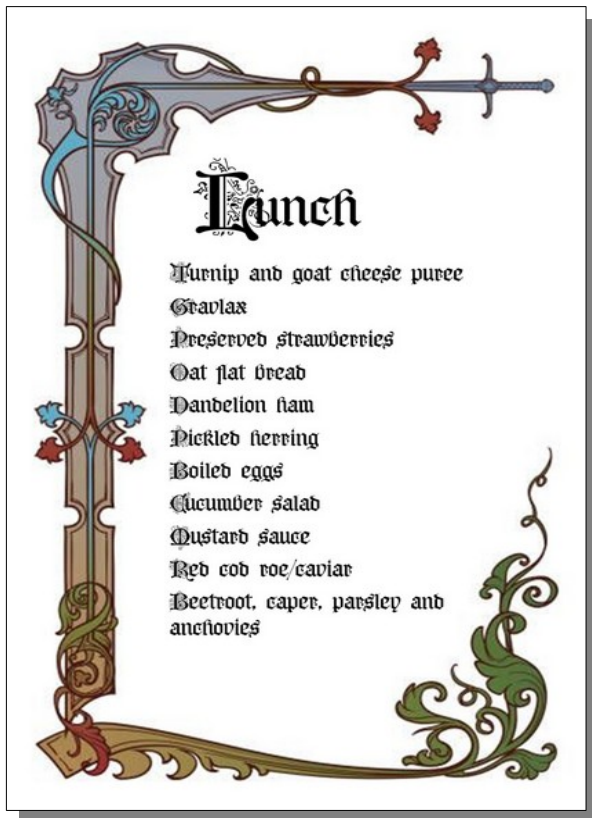
March Crown Tourney 2026

Event concept

This menu was put together very quickly by Master Guy le Bastarde, when Lochac found itself in urgent need of a Crown event.

He wanted to honour the Crown, Porvaldr and Amabilia, so decided to feature early-period ingredients. There's archaeological evidence and descriptions, but very little in the way of recipes of the time, just some conjectured dishes by various writers. Being Guy, he may have elaborated a little!

Lunch



One of his themes was looking at how foods could be preserved, to support a feast. Hence items like the gravlax and the strawberries preserved in honey. Guy said that all the pickled herring he served was eaten!

Another theme was making the most of the restricted range of herbs available at the time: for instance, dandelions are known to have been in regular use then, hence using dried dandelions to flavour the ham.

Dinner



The royal beef stew was royal just because it had much more meat than ordinary mortals would ever see.

The cabbage was stuff with minced beef and pork, cooked in a cherry-infused mead! (As you do.)

The meatballs of three meats were served in a sauce made with chicken stock, pickled juice, lingonberries and cream.

The roast chicken was a lowest-common-denominator tasty food for fussy eaters.

The trout was cooked with salt on the inside, cooked in a wrapping of herbs.

There was a barley bread, made by another local.

The egg cakes were made with oat flour, cooked in hot oil then finished in the oven. They were served with a compote of apple, walnut, honey and brown ale.

The "King Alfred cakes" were, as in the story, oaten griddle cakes.

Sotelties

Crowdsourced from Lochac Facebook

I asked about Lochac sotelties on Facebook, and got two responses. That didn't seem right, so I tried again and was absolutely swamped by the results.

I've shown a wide selection, heavily biased to the best photos, sorry. Clearly, we have a talented kingdom.

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

In no particular order...

A presentation of flowers, all edible. Crown Tourney 2017 here, possibly by Elizabeth Stumpe.



Eggs (by Elena Anthony?) from the "End of an Era" feast in Ynys Fawr, 2015.



An illuminated book, made of fruitcake, by Muirghéin ni Ghrainne.



For "An Evening in Granada" (Southron Gaard, 2023), Isabel Maria del Aguila made a sugarpaste pomegranate (filled with real arils) and sugarpaste carnations with gold foil details.



This is a sugar swan served at "Days of Honour" (Krae Glas, 2024), made by Mistress Bethany:



Here's a tower of jam enameled pastry made by Cecily de Montgomery, possibly for Midwinter Coronation in Cluain, 2006.



Someone posted a couple of shots from a complicated battle scene all made up of seafood, for a Canterbury Faire feast. Alas, it's so wild that photos in this format just won't work.

Some bread baskets, made of bread, for Ildhafn Anniversary 2023, by Melissa Wijffels. The baskets were made of an enriched dough, and filled with dried fruits, nuts and springerle biscuits. Melissa carved the moulds for the biscuits and the lochac flags are made with pomegranate syrup and silver leaf.



A lovely marzipan tower full of marzipan fruits, for Canterbury Faire 2020 and made by Ceina of Ballyhawke.



There's a series of increasingly elaborate boar's heads made for Rowany Yule. The most glorious of these was based on the period fruit and vegetable portraits by Arcimboldo.



To commemorate the auspicious occasion of the formal announcement of the Crescent Isles joining Lochac in 2003, Catherine of Arrowsreach made a gingerbread subtlety of a bed in the shape of a crown, with a kiwi and a kangaroo with their heads in the pillows. When the coverlet was removed there were individual gingerbread pieces in the shapes of NZ and Australia.



A gingerbread and sugar pane lantern, for Spring Coronation 2022 at Braythwayte manor! Made by Bess Braythwayte.



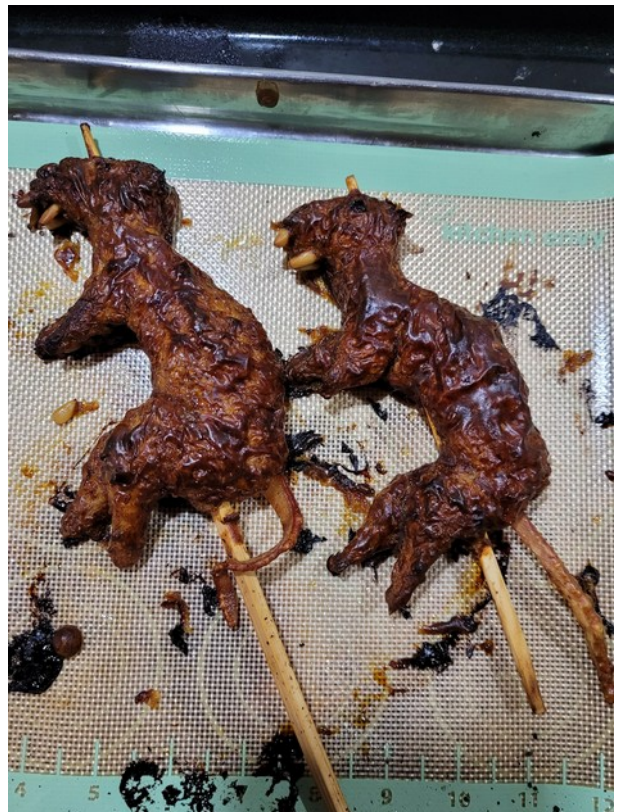
For sheer cuteness, this salad including white mice (decorated halved hard-boiled eggs) and cheese.

From "A Wee Highland Fling" (Southron Gaard, 2023), and I gather it was by Ellen of Wyteley.



There's no photo, but apparently at the William Marshal event in Stormhold one year they made a papier mache "stone" funeral effigy, which lifted off the show the food arranged anatomically, for instance sausages for intestines. Is that the most wicked thing in this article?

No, the most evil is Kiriell's "rat on a stick":



For the last word, Kinggiyadai told us about his Attican "subtlety": a half housebrick made of marzipan presented on a plate of clear toffee "glass" shards.

Classic Feast: The Good Food Feast 2015

By the Politarchopolis Assault Catering Corps

This article is summarised from an unfinished book which documents this feast in great detail.

In 1995 the first "Good Food Feast" was run, and it's written up in [Issue 1](#) of this magazine. They sought to 'raise to the bar' of what could be achieved at a feast.

In 2014, the remaining members of the group decided to raise the bar again.

PACC

The members of the Politarchopolis Assault Catering Corp (the PACC) research and re-create medieval dishes and feasts.

The name was originally created as a joke for a group of people who were reliable cooks and often called upon at short notice to cook for SCA events.

PACC was awarded the "Pride of Lochac" award in 2015, from King Steffan and Queen Branwen.

Style of event

The event's menu, style, and decoration focused on the 16th century Low Countries, as an uncommon region for a feast.

When the original GFF was run, the stewarding team had to rely on the few hard copy translated manuscripts that members either owned or borrowed. In some cases these were photocopies of photocopies.

Like other changes time had brought about since the original GFF, manuscripts and their translation are more easily available, not only to purchase but also to view as electronic versions via the Internet. While some translations were purchased, online resources proved invaluable in providing dishes for the final menu.

Event concept

Like the first GFF, the event was based on a limited number (70) of special guests, supported by a group of servers and entertainers who got much cheaper entry.

For the first GFF, the servers got a largely separate menu, and for this one they got more of the feast dishes as this made it easier to explain the dishes to the guests.



Photo by Mistress Ceara Shionnach

Planning

Planning started about twelve months before the feast. Between meetings, team members kept in touch electronically. About one month before the event, an online project management application (Basecamp) was used to keep track of tasks.

There were private Facebook groups for the stewarding team and for liaison with the servers and entertainers.

The hall

The oven was particularly poor, so the kitchen team brought four smoking ovens of their own.

There were gorgeous wall hangings, faux stained glass windows and specially made carpets.

There were lovely chandeliers borrowed from some friends, and the ceiling was lined with blue fabric covered with white stars.

There was an ambry (credenza) which displayed some of the sugarwork developed for the event, and other pieces of period furniture.

As the guests entered the hall, their hands were washed by servers using two specially-crafted aquamanille ewers, one shaped as a bull and the other as a sheep.



Photo by Mistress Ceara Shionnach

On the tables

Guests were provided with several items as mementoes of the event. Metal plates were treated to appear as pewter, and the spoons were modelled from a 16th century original.

The glasses were painted with the cornucopia badge of PACC, and a Politarchopolis griffin.

Servers/entertainers

Servers/entertainers were served a selection of dishes, mainly from the menu for the guests. By having the servers partake in dishes that were going to be served to the guests meant that they could more easily answer any questions that may arise from the guests about the food.

The guidance for the servers included the following:

One of the secrets of good service is to balance friendliness with professional separation. It contributes to the perception that the feast exists for the guests and is happening to them, rather than the guest simply being present whilst food is brought out.

The basic idea that the GFF propounds is that a feast is a combination of food, entertainment, decoration, and other items, at which the guest is the focus.

Many of you will have friends at the feast and it is only normal to want to greet them as a friend and to sit and chat with them. This detracts from the focus of the feast.

Instead, you should be polite and conduct your role as a server to the exclusion of other modes of conduct. Remember, for this night you are not a count, or a knight, or a duchess, but rather a simple server of gentle rank.

Menu

1ST COURSE

Stuffed quail eggs

Hardboiled, halved, yolk removed, spiced with chopped apple then packed into the half, stuck together again and pan fried in butter.

Pickled smoked tongue

Salted and pressed beef tongue, smoked, boiled, peeled and finely sliced.

Pickled vegetables

Peeled diced root vegetables, boiled in a pickling solution with saffron. With onions and purple carrots pickled separately.

Pea kebabs

[no information located]

Fresh breads

Pretzels served on wooden swords, and manslin (wheat/rye) bread.



Photo by kitchen team

2ND COURSE

Fresh oysters with flowers of lemon

The lemons have the skin and pith removed, the remaining fruit soaked and then sliced into flower shapes. The flowers go in the oyster shells with the oyster on top.

Spiced baked salmon with rye pastry scales

Finely sliced, rolled in spice then rolled up for baking. For particular presentation at this feast, the pastry was baked separately as scales to serve the salmon on.

This was served from a giant wooden fish carved from a tree stump, carried into the hall by four servers with others waving blue tulle to emulate water and waves.

Roasted goose

Boned and roasted, served with a green garlic and sorrel sauce.

Spinach cooked in the Hungarian manner

Spinach, red onions and raisins cooked in half water and half wine.

Golden scallops

Shells of sugar paste, with scallop meat of almond jelly, and roe of marzipan.



Photo by kitchen team

3RD COURSE

Pastry with small birds

Boned pigeons and quails with bacon, grapes and sweet fortified wine, made as small pies.



Photo by Mistress Ceara Shionnach

Whole roast veal

The veal was cooked on a spit and served with two sauces: a yellow pepper sauce and a blood red (blackberry and wine) sauce.

White sausages

Boiled pork and hardboiled eggs, minced, spiced, packed into natural sausage skins. These were pulled as entrails from the body of the veal, and a seer made oracular predictions.

Carrot puree with violets

Boiled carrots cooked in almond milk and wine, mixed with herbs and violet flowers.

Mustard

Made with mustard seeds and pine nuts.

Salted beetroot

Beetroot steamed, salted and pickled with horseradish and caraway.

Pickled cabbage

Another pickle, with juniper berries for flavouring.

4TH COURSE

Spanish pastries

Spanish pastry pillows of sweet almond and butter layered pastry.

Pear tarts

Browned, floured pear slices laid out in a tart and baked with a syrup over them.

Plum Tarts

Prunes poached in red wine, as a custard tart.

Hand crafted cheeses

Cheeses made for the feast, with cheese crackers.

Sugar plates

Majolica-style plates made from sugar paste.



Photo by Mistress Ceara Shionnach

DRINKS

Spiced lemon cordial

White wine hypocras

Red wine hypocras

Koelsch style beer

Entertainment

Music

The music throughout the feast was performed on a mixture of flute, recorders and crumhorn by Mistress Kiriell du Papillon, Lady Ailis and Milady Ngaire.

Puppet Show

A puppet show was presented by Mistress Rowan Perigrinne and Lord Nicodemus Novello on the theme of Lady Godiva.

Theatrical tableaux

Three tableaux in the style of sixteenth century Germany were presented.

- The story of Judith and John the Baptist. Judith was presented as in German portraiture, sword raised, with the head of John the Baptist on a plate.



Photo by Mistress Ceara Shionnach

- Adam and Eve. Adam is often depicted holding a hoe, and Eve holding a spindle in one hand. Eve held a spindle and in the other hand a pomegranate formed of icing. When opened, it contained seeds made of icing, flavoured with pomegranate molasses and painted to look like pomegranate seeds. Eve walked around afterwards offering these to the crowd.
- The third was also a very typical sixteenth century German portrait – an old man standing with his hand down the bodice of a beautiful woman, and her with her hand reaching into his purse for gold. The gold coins were sugar plate pressed and gilded in the form of period coins.

More information

There's a detailed writeup of the presentational aspects of the event at:

<https://history.lochac.sca.org/events/good-food-feast-asl/>

More information on the detailed recipes may be available from PACC members.

Fritters

By Master Cristoval

Many years ago, I did apple and parsnip fritters, for a Torlyon feast, from a *Forme of Cury* recipe. They were well received.

I did them again, the apple ones at least, at a Rowany Festival. It was a chilly day, and the hot fritters off the fire were quite magical, dusted with cinnamon and brown sugar. I've made them many times since then.

This article describes my further adventures with fritters. Fritters often taste better than they look!

Herb fritters

These are also from my favourite *Forme of Cury* cookbook:

“Take gode erbys. grynde hem and medle hem with flour and water & a lytel zest and salt, and frye hem in oyle. and ete hem with clere hony”.

In other words, take good herbs, grind and mix them with flour, water, a little yeast and salt. Fry them in oil and eat them with clear honey. It's implied that you leave the batter to prove for say an hour, in a warm spot.

I've always got lots of herbs in my garden, so this is a no-brainer for a cheap vegetable dish. However I don't recommend fennel leaves, beautiful and delicious ferns that they are, because they make for hairy fritters.



(hairy fritters)

My favourite is sage, sorrel and chives. For this one you just mix the finely chopped herbs and seasoning with the batter, or you can mix with egg and (GF) breadcrumbs then coat with the batter.

For all the other fritters I mention in this article, I deep fry them. However these herb fritters work pretty well shallow-fried in a frypan, which saves greatly on effort and clean-up. I remember doing these in Dark Skies 40 years ago!

Mushroom fritters

I was making these as a vegetarian alternative to (eg) meat pies, but found that everybody who missed out was disappointed, so now I do them for all. I use the smallest field mushrooms I can find, preferably whole or halve if too big.

I use a beer batter for these, as I do for the apple fritters. The recipe used to be more complicated, but now I just buy a sixpack of discounted beer (because you kinda have to). You can use gluten-free flour, so I generally do.

I used to add a little yeast and leave for proving, but actually it works fine just mixing the flour to get a thick creamy batter. Add some salt and (particularly for mushrooms) some pepper, maybe a little mustard for these.

We generally use only one or two stubbies. I ask the kitchen crew for ideas to use the rest up, and we never seem to have to take them home.

Frying arrangements

You need space and a dedicated person to do fritters at a feast. The stovetop is a messy place to do them, but sometimes that's the only option.

It works well to have a separate gas camping stove on a big area of stainless steel benchtop.

The oil must be really hot. In period this likely would have been sheep tallow, but I use generic Aldi vegetable oil as available and vegetarian.

You can judge it by eye after a while, but people swear by putting a wooden spoon handle in and looking for bubbles, or a drop of batter.

Putting the fritters into the oil drops the temperature, so don't put too many in at once.

I have a long spoon with a fine mesh on it to fish them out again, as that's good for pulling out every skerrick of cooked batter – otherwise that burns and affects the flavour.

The fritters will bob to the top once they're done. It's usually a good idea to turn them over for even browning, but you have to judge it carefully.

Then I dump them on to kitchen paper and get them served as soon as I can. Sometimes you want to scatter something like a *powdre douce* mix (eg cinnamon, sugar, ginger, mace) – I keep a shaker for that. Or you can serve them with a sharp sauce.

Cheese fritters

My favourite fritter is the beer-battered brie cheese fritters I do for Flametree Ball, with a plum and ginger sauce. They are just delicious.

I prefer the small Aldi rounds of brie, chopped into 12 pieces. These fry really well.

These are not from a specific recipe, though there are extant recipes for many sorts of cheese fritter.

I had a go at some **Magnificent fritters of the Emperor**, from *Libro di cucina*, c1500. Just because the name is so cool.

There's a similar Spanish recipe which says the cheese slices are to be the thickness of a finger, which seems enormous and wasteful for a feast, so I did mine as about 5mm slices of Colby cheese. The recipe says to make a batter of eggwhite, flour and "peeled pine nuts" which I gather are the normal type – I crushed them in a mortar to a rough consistency.

They came out as lumpy rectangles, not really very pretty. There were darker patches where the cheese leaked out past the batter, I think a feature rather than a bug.

They were tasty enough, but still too big to serve at a feast. Maybe if I'd chopped them in half (ie to approximate squares). Would have benefited from some mustard and more pepper (I did put a little) in the batter. It needed a sharper cheese, you could

use a mature cheddar or something fancier and likely more expensive.



(less than magnificent fritters of the emperor)

Crispels

These also in *Forme of Cury*; not sure they're really a fritter, but you take thin pastry in strips or circles and fry them. They provide a great textural contrast for soggy stews or desserts.

Hastlelets

Forme of Cury has a recipe for fruit on a spit, which you then cook by dribbling batter on it till it looks like deer entrails.

That's pretty hard for a feast, but another version (*A Boke of Kokery*) threads them on a piece of thread before dipping in batter, which is what we do. Can be delightful if your batter is thick enough and the oil hot enough. Remember to pull the cotton out once cooked!

Books will tell you can thread nuts – you really can't. Apples, dates and prunes work well, bananas are great though pretty marginal for Europe. Stonefruit pieces can be good in season.

Other sweet fritters

I've made **marzipan fritters** (*Libre del Coch*, ~1520). You have to make up the marzipan at least a week before so that it dries enough to survive the process. I cut them out as stars, and the batter is flour and eggs and white wine.

I had a go at some **sour cherry fritters** (*Alte Kochrezepte aus dem bayrischen*, c1500). They would have used fresh cherries; I used a jar of Morello cherries (from a Woolies jar). You need to drain the cherries and let them dry a while, roll in flour, then in batter (flour and eggs). A nice sharp centre, but they just look like little dough balls.

A&S Food Entries - Byzantium

By Master Cristoval

Mestrez Ysabeau Chanteuse is promoting food entries to Kingdom A&S competitions (see [article](#), issue 3).

She provided such an entry for the March 2026 Crown Tourney. As the event was in Mordenvale (Newcastle NSW), she arranged to have her kingdom A&S entry judged locally in Canberra.

The specific topic was "Byzantium". Of all the cultures of the time, this is one where there are surprisingly few documentary sources translated into English.

The Politarchopolis A&S officer invited others to contribute dishes on the same basis, for a pot luck lunch at the weekly A&S gathering.

There were nine entries in total, with lentils and cheesecakes particularly popular.



As a local group activity, it was pretty engaging and well supported. It encouraged several more people to put entries into the kingdom competition, which might encourage them to participate in future.

The local judges were Dame Joan Sutton (the Kingdom A&S Officer) and myself, as the Chronicler for the Cooks Guild. Most groups could find a couple of credible judges, eg the local A&S officer and a visiting Laurel.

As a pot luck lunch, it mostly worked. To do the judging, we had to kick out the populace from time to time – fortunately Polit has a side room which worked well for this purpose.

I gather that many of the Polit entrants looked up "Byzantine cooking" on the Web, and came up with the same small set of pretty rubbery recipes. Many of these were based on Apicius, which is Western Roman Empire around 400AD, on the assumption that the Eastern Empire was much the same. Some took the view that Greek cooking would be influential, which is valid.

Ysabeau herself found some primary sources, but they were passing references and patchy scraps, which she turned into a solid case. The limited sources meant there was an upper limit on how much could be scored for authenticity. For many other A&S topics, that wouldn't be an issue.

It's been many years since I have judged for a Lochac-wide competition, and the new system was interesting. There are various categories, and a rubric with fairly clear judging standards. I think most judges would have come to the same conclusions. There was a wide range in scores achieved, reflecting the work put in.

Ysabeau's contention is that many A&S competitions are suitable for food entries. In this case that proved valid, and for many other cultures the documentation would be easier.

I was surprised at how much the populace enjoyed participating in this exercise. The pot luck idea worked well, and it would also be possible for a feast cook to pick up the theme and make an entry that way. I hope we see more such entries.



Apotki and Apáki

Mestrez Ysabeau Chanteuse

For Autumn Crown Tourney, I made apaki and apotki using pork and goat meats, under the A&S theme “Byzantium”.



Apotki

The recipe for apotki I used comes from Dr. Ursula Janssen's YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/@Ursulashistoricalrecipes>.

Dr Janssen's 2025 recipe is: *Debone the goat meat, cut into wide strips, and salt for 24 hours. Sun-dry for one day. On day three, lightly cook in boiling water, remove and coat with dried Greek oregano. Sun-dry until completely cured.*

I made two versions of apotki - one dried in an electric dehydrator and the other dried outdoors in a mesh basket. It's difficult to identify the difference between them.



All the meats were sliced by hand - the advantage of being a chef is very sharp knives and good control. Someone else might need an electric slicer.

Apáki

Apáki is a traditional cured meat with roots that trace back to Byzantine times.

Multiple recipes I examined use strips of lean pork, marinated in vinegar and seasoned with aromatic herbs—such as thyme, oregano, bay leaf, and rosemary.



After marination, the meat is smoked using olive or vine wood and then left to mature (Gastronomy Tours, n.d.).

By contrast, Janssen suggests salting a whole piece of pork loin, marinating for 3 days in vinegar; rolling in cinnamon, pepper and savoury and hanging in a cool place for six weeks.

The apaki would traditionally be smoked outdoors. I used a gas powered smoker, with olive wood.

My modern palate struggled with the intensity resulting from the 24 hour vinegar soak, so I will reduce that down to 8-12 hours next time.

Results

Both meats needed to be very thinly sliced to be palatable.

While I loved the aroma of the savoury & cinnamon marinade, the mouth feel of the aromatics marinated apaki was better.

I am blessed that my butcher stocks goat legs and shoulders. Next time I would like to try wild boar.

Stirring the Pot

Thoughts from the Chronicler

In the [last issue](#), I queried the current guild progression system, and invited comments.

There have been times in the past when it seems to have worked OK, and many in Lochac have taken part. I found 13 people granted Mastery in the guild. Just one, Thomasina Coke, ever became a Laurel for cooking, and I found nobody given Mastery since she was in 2011.

My conclusion is that the system is currently broken. It's clear that many guild members like the idea of a recognition system, and would be pleased to play if we can make it happen again.

We need a workable way of celebrating individual progression in this art. There needs to be better links into the awards system and the Laurels. Actually there are only 15 cooking laurels in Lochac, for all time, which seems pretty low given the amount of cooking that is done.

From the online feedback, I took the following:

- The system needs to be simpler
- We could pick up some modern ways of doing it: maybe Facebook photos count!
- We need to have a dedicated person maintaining it
- There needs to be a way to recognise those who have been doing this stuff for many years
- Guild mastery should get you on the Laurel watch list!

Would anybody like to have a go at developing such a system? Happy for this to be after Festival!

Master Cristoval
Guild Chronicler



Some chicken and leek pies I made for Torlyon's 30th anniversary event. They asked me to use recipes from back in the day.

The base eggwash has some Parisian essence in it for contrast. I put another eggwash on as they went into the oven.

