

What's in the pot?

Magazine of the Lochac Cooks Guild

Guild Journal #6 June 2026

From the Guild Administrator

I can't believe it's winter already! Can anyone else? Still, it's a great time to road test pottage and sops recipes. Don't forget to post everything about your adventures to the Guild Facebook page!

It's also a time to think about Big Breakfasts, which is the theme for this month's newsletter. Master Cristoval has also provided a menu and notes for a New Year's Feast with an Elizabethan English theme, and appears to have caught the Elizabethan food bug... I shall be interested to see what becomes of this.

As always, happy cooking and sharing food!

Mistress Leoba of Lecelade

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A scene from the *Tres Riches Heures*, a subtlety by Lady Ceina of Ballyhawke for Canterbury Faire 2020.

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An SCA Breakfast

Crowdsourced from Lochac Facebook

I did my best on SCA names, groups and dates, but the Facebook format doesn't facilitate that. This is just a bit of fun, and no correspondence will be entered into!

The best breakfast

There's pretty good evidence that the best breakfast available in Lochac is the bunsmiths' apple and cinnamon buns, hot from the oven and slathered in butter, at **Canterbury Faire**. As recommended by Ariston, Taryn E, Callum Macleod, Elizabet Hunter and Hanibal of SG.



Pretty good breakfasts

It seems that Lochac likes a bit of variety for brekky.

Great Northern War does bacon and egg rolls, and apparently a pretty good oat cake fresh off the barbie.

Spring War has a Baron & Baroness Breakfast, with a huge barbecue, a LOT of eggs and bacon and mushrooms, and all the pointy hats tending them. Really good mushrooms are the secret!

Breakfast as made by Clifford Asheburner:



Leftovers

Angele Marie reported that last night's leftovers fried up in egg over the fire is the **Atelier** standard breakfast at Festival. Purple carrots make it go blue.

Fencing Fest has a tradition of bubble and squeak vegies from the night before.

About 30 years ago there was a period encampment, and at breakfast time there was a jug of leftover chardwarden (stewed pears with pepper and spices). It tasted great with porridge, and Sara van den Hove has been making it every since, for her grandchildren and the folks of Stormy Glas. Mistress Rowan still makes it too. Sara serves it with porridge, butter, currants, brown sugar and cream.

Bacon

OK, nearly everybody loves bacon, except Leoba and Cristoval from the Cooks Guild.

But most people like something else to cut it with.

Eggs

Fried eggs are popular. Wulfgar is recommended for his scrambled eggs. Soggy scrambled eggs seem to be a problem in some quarters.

At Canterbury Faire they have chilli on the first night for convenience. In the morning, they break eggs on the leftovers, grate some cheese on it and bake in the barbecue. While no doubt tasty, it's clearly cheating!

Porridge

Cristoval likes his made with half milk and water, and only with proper rolled oats. Others prefer just water so milk-intolerant people can enjoy it too. Lots of people add fruit and nuts. Margie of Glen More swears by nutmeg and brown sugar.

Eleanor Hall recommends crystallised ginger and dried cranberries.

Halloumi

A number of correspondents mentioned the value of halloumi in a fry-up. Matthijs Tjepke van der Horst recommends the Paesanella cheese factory in Marrickville as especially good value.

Pancakes

Isabella de Bordeaux loves pancakes cooked at Festival by Isabella Milia de Fiori, maple syrup (real canadian) and lemon with sugar, plus jams if preferred.

Marit the Wanderer says she served crepes suzettes at one of the first Rowany Festivals, offered to King Jade who was passing.

Other sublime

His Majesty King Aonghus has done black pudding, fried in an iron skillet with butter until the outside is nice and crusty and the inside is nice and melty. Recommended with some pan fried halloumi.

Lucia de Valle loves making the Eierküchen recipe from Volker Bach's Landsknecht book. Onions, apples, eggs, yum yum.

Ellen of Wyteley likes to make yeast-raised waffles, based on a circa 1500 Dutch recipe and a similar modern one. You either need to get up very early for the right rise, or leave it overnight in a fridge where that's an option.

Other ridiculous

Taddea had rollmops for breckers one day, and lived to regret it. James Douglas says that rollmops used to be an authorisation ritual in Borderscros – no wonder they ran out of fighters! (Actually your Editor would be happy to give them a go...)

Brunch in Krae Glas

Royal Brunch includes small pastizzi (ricotta and spinach), eggs, bacon and fluffy pancakes with maple syrup and jam. Mushrooms, spinach, tomato fry up. Fruit juice, coffee, tea, chocolate. Followed by scones, whipped cream, homemade plum jam with berries and mascarpone.



No breakfast

There's a big group of Lochacians who just can't wake up in time for breakfast, and are a bit cranky about missing out.

Conclusion

Ari Egillsdóttir commented that "to be an SCA breakfast it must be done with friends, kind folk, generosity and good company. This experience moulded my young understanding of what inclusivity and generosity were."

Jochen on Breakfasts

Graff (Count) Jochen has cooked a great many breakfasts in Lochac, and has some tips on how this should be done at scale.

Your team

- If someone fronts up to the kitchen with apron in hand you can rest assured, they will be good help.
- Sometimes, when someone volunteers the best thing to do is look them in the eye and ask them “Are you willing to do something that is unpleasant?”.
- Know your team. If you know that what you are planning might be outside their comfort zone, discuss it with them. You might be surprised as to what they are willing to run with.
- It's OK to say NO!

Buying stuff

- As of 2025, \$5 per head is plenty enough for breakfast budget, including a margin for profit.
- Your starting point is 10 People need 1kg Bacon, 1 dozen eggs.
- Take photos of receipts in store.

Allergies

- If you are running the food, it is YOUR responsibility to ensure that no one ends up going to hospital because of an allergic reaction.
- Have a plan for addressing allergies and other dietary requirements. One option is to have one competent person look after it.
- Sometimes it is better to identify people with dietary requirements and have a single person from your core team take out their food. It keeps a tight leash on the control of this process.
- Some things, like Nuts, you may just have a hard NO to.

Bread etc

- Get white, wholemeal and multigrain.
- If you have baskets or trays, an option is to lay the bread out on it and periodically top it up. Lots less hands in to the same bag and germ potential.
-

- Some people prefer the crust.
- Gluten free bread is a bit of a mystery to me. It's one of the few things where it is OK for the plan to be “we'll do a run to get more if we need it”.
- Nuttlex is safe, but butter tastes better! Have both. But make sure there is no cross-contamination of knives for spreading!
- French toast is awesome on the BBQ, but make sure that anyone with a gluten intolerance has been fed first!



Bacon

- I'm happy with generic bacon. If the bacon has been poorly cut creating “bacon steaks” do not fear, some people love bacon steak.
- Separate the bacon and put on plates before it goes to the BBQ. This makes it easier and cleaner for whoever is on the BBQ.

Eggs

- When cooking scrambled eggs its far easier to overcook them than to undercook them.

Porridge

- About 10% of people love porridge and are very happy to have it there. Porridge is cheap, yes you may throw half of it out but that cost less than \$1.
- Make it plain porridge. Brown sugar, apples, cinnamon etc, people can add themselves.
- Like rice, porridge expands as it cooks, don't overestimate how much you'll need.
- The person who goes on about how the porridge isn't quite right has volunteered to do it tomorrow.

Fruit

- Apples, oranges, grapes and bananas are good. Leave them out there for the day. If people can just help themselves, they will, especially the kids.

Drinks

- For breakfasts and hot drinks station. Milk, 2/3 full cream to 1/3 skim. Have non-dairy alternatives, soy & almond.
- Inexpensive fruit juice is nice to have out there, it's also the first thing I drop if tightening the belt.
- For a weekend camping event, one large jar of Moccona isn't enough. One large tin of International Roast is too much.

Set up

- When setting up a breakfast area my goal is to make the breakfast experience at least as pleasant as a buffet in a mid-priced motel.
- How you store stuff in the kitchen can make a difference to efficiency. If you have shelf-space empty your shopping bags onto it with everything neatly lined up. That way you can say "on the shelf" and they've found it in 10 seconds.
- Have a spare gas bottle or KNOW you won't run out.
- If you serve from the BBQ then you save double handling. Also it's hot and it's easier to fry the eggs exactly how people like them. But make sure you have enough people on the BBQ that people aren't waiting in line for an age.

Tables

- Setting up breakfast condiments etc. Have a teaspoon, knife etc for each jar of jam, or butter etc laid out ready to go. Avoids cross contamination. Check regularly and replace as required.
- Same for the Hot Drinks station! Have separate spoons for the Coffee, Tea, Sugar and Milo. Also, have spare spoons.
- Lay out everything on the table in a nice orderly fashion. Check regularly - Rubbish in the bin!

On the day

- If you have offered to help at breakfast, sneak into the kitchen the night before and suss out where everything is. Cooking implements, toasters, urn, jugs, things to be cooked, chopping boards, where the gas is etc.
- Hang 2 tea-towels off your apron, one for wiping grot off your hands, the other for drying.
- Monitor the urn, less than 2/3 top it up. Every time I go past I have a look. Have a jug of water next to the urn to top it up from.
- It can be annoying to have people come and hassle you in the kitchen. The questions they ask should serve as prompts. If they ask for water, put a jug out. If they ask to wash up their dishes think about a washing up station. If they ask for milk at the urn, then you've run out.

Bins

- Have a plan for your rubbish bins, make sure the kitchen crew know.
- Don't overstuff liners, they split.
- Put a roll or a few bin liners in the bottom of the rubbish bin for when it gets emptied.

Washing up

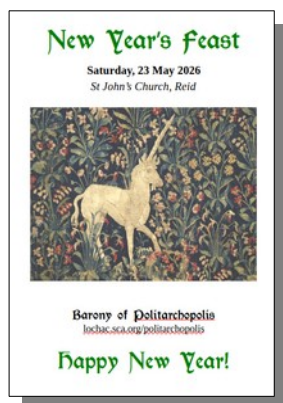
- When setting up a washing up station, put a bin next to it for scraps.
- An option is to have a wash bowl and a rinse bowl. When the wash bowl gets too manky, squirt some detergent into the rinse bowl, which will become the new wash bowl. Fill now empty bowl with hot water (as hot as possible without causing injury).
- You can never have too many tea-towels.

New Year's Feast 2026

By Master Cristoval

Introduction

In May, I was chief cook for the New Year's Event in Politarchopolis.



The menu was taken from Elizabethan England, in particular from Eleanor Fettiplace's Receipt Book.

The Fettiplace recipes were published in 1986 by Hillary Spurling, who inherited from her husband's last great-aunt a handwritten receipt (ie recipe) book with the inscription "Lady Elinor Fetiplace. 1604."

Many of the recipes are in Eleanor's hand, and there are later additions in more modern hands as the book apparently continued in use. So some care is needed.

Spurling only gives you the original recipe sometimes: often you just get her redaction of some possibly scrappy original notes. It is nevertheless a wonderful resource: you see the fading of older medieval traditions, and the emergence of a new and lighter cuisines featuring seasonal produce, preserves and pickles out of season, and a few quite new things.

Not all the recipes were from Fettiplace: I also used The Good Huswifes Jewell (1596) and A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen (1602).

The menu

There was an afternoon tea, which I won't detail here: caraway rings, cheese biscuits and 'white bisket bread'. The rings were basically a jumball biscuit, and the bisket bread is from Fettiplace.

I did the feast as a fairly solid savoury course, then a platter of sweet delights for each table.

Two of the major dishes had an alternative for food allergies or preferences, of which Polit has a lot! Some of the dishes had variant versions to cater for particular participants.

FIRST COURSE

- Mutton with orange sauce
 - mushroom and leek with verjuice alternative
- Batter pudding with sack sauce
- Buttered vegetables
- Chicken pie
 - carrot & ricotta tart GF alternative
- Sweet potatoes
- Herb salad
- Lemon salad

For the **mutton**, I got the biggest lambs I could from my local butcher. To get the quantity of rolled shoulder roasts, he tacked it on to a big order for the Goulburn high security gaol. The largest roast was 2.8kg, which is a mighty thing.

The event was at St John's Hall in Reid in Canberra, and they had recently remodelled the kitchen. I hadn't used the stove before, and while Mistress Rowan kindly sent me a photo of the open oven, I was surprised how small it was.

I used foil trays for easier cleanup and compact size, but we barely fitted them in. Rowan uses the kitchen regularly for a homeless charity, and does such impressive things there that I can only credit it to long experience and some real cleverness.

The **sauce** was meat juices, red wine and orange juice with spices, along with some lemon peel saved from a later dish. This was really nice at home; I'm not sure it got the full justice being prepared in the frantic time just before service. Oranges feature in Elizabethan cooking as they had just become much more available.

The **mushrooms and leeks with verjuice** alternative dish was the last addition, after calculating the sweet spot for the allergies. It was

from an earlier period English recipe. It looked appetising, but I didn't get to taste it myself. The trick with mushrooms is to space them out when browning them.

The **batter pudding** was a nicely browned fluffy thing with sultanas in currants in it, served with a sack (really butter/brown sugar/port) sauce. Several people told me it was their favourite dish. I enjoyed it myself, and will certainly make it again. Spurling gave the original recipe and I followed it more than her redaction.

The **chicken pie** was broadly from a Jewell recipe, and I've been working to refine my chicken pies anyway. They got lots of compliments. I had three pastry flower cutouts on top, and a couple more dropping down to the surrounding plate (ie made from leftover pastry).

With our very limited oven space, I had to cook the pies early and keep them at a low heat in an outside smoker oven – which worked much better than I feared.

The **carrot and ricotta tart** alternative dish was a non-Elizabethan late addition to meet the needs of the largest number of allergies, driven by the required ingredients rather than the history. It looked lovely, featuring heritage colours of carrots.

The **sweet potatoes** were from Fettiplace, presented as the first of the New World vegetables to make a mark in England.

I collected some orange flowers (nasturtium and marigolds) to scatter as a garnish, but we had two kitchen crew down at that point (knife cut and overheating) so that bit of magic didn't happen.

In the test dinners, I finished these in the oven, but that wasn't possible in this kitchen so the only thing we could do was microwave them at the end and pour on a sauce.

The **herb salad** was stuff from my garden, with some extra cos lettuce and supermarket leaves mixed in. There were long slivers of hardboiled egg on top, both of these to provide more variety for the many vegetarians.

The **lemon salad** was kind of cool. It's mentioned in Jewell, and you get a special tool to run eight+ long grooves down the sides of a lemon, then slice thinly and cover in sugar. It makes a great palate cleanser after all that rich food – some people really loved it.

SECOND COURSE

- Lemon marzipan unicorn
- Rose marzipan
- Tudor rose marchpane
- Macaroons
- Elderflower shortbread
- Candied orange peel
- Manus christi toffee



The **lemon marzipan unicorn** could have been moulded by hand, and I have done that in the past, but this time I imported a soft silicon mould. OK, it was a bit cutesy, but it could have been a lot worse. Getting the unicorns out was not trivial, and required some restorative surgery, but it worked pretty well. My kitchen assistant Maes painted the manes, tails and horns a fetching yellow colour, and these were the centrepiece on a rich green fabric.

The following items were scattered around it, all as flowers of different colours.

The **rose marzipan** was included because I already had a mould for a tudor rose. I intended a pale pink, but overdid it on the food colouring, my consistent but only fault! These were flavoured with rosewater.

The **tudor rose marchpane** is a baked marzipan-type biscuit. A cool thing about marchpane is that you can cut out various bits and they will stick together pretty well. These were also flavoured with rosewater, because I had to really.

The **macaroonds** are a Fettiplace recipe. You make an almond paste and apply it to a wafer – I used Aldi cheese wafers which are a great size. Basically you transfer as much to the wafer as you can with a knife, stick an extra lump on top, then smooth them out with wet fingers.

You bake these to a light brown, then glaze them with egg yolk and cook a few more minutes. When golden brown, you fish them out, and glaze them cold with orangewater and icing sugar and eggwhite. They are delicious and quite fascinating.

The **elderflower shortbread** is not from any of my listed sources, I put it down as 'traditional'. I wanted something that wasn't almondy, and these are lovely. Fettiplace has a recipe for "sirrope of any hearbe or flower" so it's fair.

The **candied orange peel** is mentioned in Fettiplace and I didn't really use a recipe. You boil it for hours in sugar syrups, and I changed the

syrup three times. I did them as pierced cinquefoils, and you can only get a certain size out of an orange peel. Valencias are easier to peel than navels, and you have to scrape off most of the pith. They were delicious and I got several compliments.

The manus **christi toffee** recipe was from the Closet source. It's just a hard crack toffee with some looseleaf gold leaf stirred in rapidly after you take it off the heat. I had some silicon moulds of little flowers, which worked up to a point – I'm sure I would get better with more practice. They looked pretty, but adults can only take a little toffee!

Reception

The feast went down very well, and the unicorn platters delighted people.

I'm tempted to explore the Elizabethan cuisine some more. Maybe next year, if Crispin (the event steward) will play ...



A Good Tart of Eggs

By Mestrez Ysabeau Chanteuse

Introduction

The documented origin of baked custard is found in De Re Coquinaria as “tyropatina”:

Accipies lac, quod adversus patinam aestimabis, temperabis lac cum melle quasi ad lactantia, ova quinque ad sextarium mittis, si ad heminam, ova tria. In lacte dissolvit ita ut unum corpus facias, in Cumana colas et igni lento coques. Cum duxerit ad se, piper aspargis et inferes.

Take milk, the quantity you deem fit for your pan. Mix the milk with honey as to make cheese, five eggs for one sextarium of milk or three for one hemina. Mix them well with the milk. Pour in a pan and cook at low heat. When it thickens, dust with pepper and serve.

Recipes for baked custard tarts such as daryols can be found in *Forme of Cury* (Pegge, 2023) and *Two Fifteenth Century Cookery Books* (Austin, 2020). Mistress Euriol of Lothien has redacted one of Austin’s daryols recipes that includes fruit in [a baked custard tart](#) (Baldassano, 2025).

Flaugnarde/Clafoutis

In the Occitan regions of Southern France, baked custard morphed into what we now know as *flaugnarde* or *clafoutis*. The honey was replaced with sugar, and flour and fruit joined the other ingredients. (Traditionally, clafoutis uses unpitted cherries, and flaugnarde uses other fruit.)

In other regions of France, historical change created *creme brûlée*, and *flan patissier*. The significant difference between dishes such as daryols and flaugnarde or clafoutis is the addition of flour and fruit to the custard base.

The name clafoutis makes its first documented appearance in 1864, and is derived from the Occitan word ‘clafir’ (to fill) (Westbeek, 2025).

Flaugnarde derives from the Occitan word “fleunhe,” meaning “soft” or “downy,” (Gora, 2013).

The closest period recipe that I have found to flaugnarde or clafoutis is a recipe for Tart of Eggs in Balthasar Staindl’s 1547 publication *Ain künstlichs und nutzlichs Kochbuch*, as documented by Bach (2025):

A good tart of eggs

lxxx) Take eight eggs to a mess (tisch), beat them well, then take more sweet cream than you have of eggs, let it boil, and pour it in with the eggs.

Make a roux with flour and fat, about a good spoonful, pour the eggs and cream into the pan in which you are cooking the flour, and stir (ruer) it well together or beat (zwierl) it. Salt it and add some sugar.

Then take a pan that has a little fat in it, heat it so it is coated with fat everywhere, pour off the fat and dust the greasy pan with semolina (grieß). Then pour in the eggs and milk as described before.

Set it over coals, heat a pot lid, and put some hot ash and embers on top of it. Let it bake gently, that way it will be brown above and below and detaches easily from the pan. Sprinkle sugar on it.

Staindel’s tarts use a cooked roux, whereas modern flaugnarde and clafoutis add the flour to the egg and sugar mix before cooking.

Inference

Sometime between the 14th and 19th centuries, someone in Occitanian France had insufficient flour to make the pasty base for a tart, but had a superfluity of eggs and fruit. Or perhaps they were short on the fat they needed for a roux or pastry. So they added the flour and fruit to the custard base and hoped for the best. Et viola, flaugnarde and clafoutis!

My Redaction

I have documented the existence of variations of baked custard from the 5th to the 16th century, including custards that include fruit.

While I cannot specifically document a dish cooked in the exact manner of flaugnarde and clafoutis, all the ingredients existed and the skills and equipment required were available.

Staindl documented his tart of eggs in 1547. It seems likely that undocumented variations on the theme of baked fruit custard existed across Europe at this time.

Version One

My first attempt at flaugarde was made for the Politarchopolis End of Year Picnic in April AS LX. There is no photographic evidence from that event.

I used Audrey Le Goff's recipe for flaugarde, with a few blueberries as my garden only provided 250g of raspberries and strawberries.

The oven in the hall was less than ideal - temperature control was erratic, and the base of the flaugarde was over cooked before the centre was almost set. Few of the edges browned or puffed up.

Version Two

This version is based on Staindl's good tart of eggs, with the addition of fruit from my garden.

8 eggs (at room temperature)
1.2l pouring cream
150g caster sugar
100g butter
100g plain flour
Large pinch of salt
350g raspberries

Preheat oven to 140°C (fan forced).

Grease a baking dish. Sprinkle the raspberries across the base of the dish.

Heat, but do not boil the cream, remove from heat and allow to cool slightly. (Eggs will start cooking at temperatures over 60°C.)

Make a roux with the butter and plain flour and allow to cool slightly. (Try to have the liquid and the roux at similar temperatures to reduce lumps.)

Whisk the eggs to mix, but not aerate. Slowly add the cream to the eggs, stirring well between each addition.

Slowly add the cream & egg mix to the roux, stirring well between each addition. Add the salt & sugar, and strain into the prepared baking dish.

Bake for 1.5 hours until the dish is set, browned and detaching from the sides of the pan.

Serve hot, warm or cold. If cold, dust with icing sugar before serving.

This version is evenly browned, with a good spread of fruit. It was served during the early evening at the Politarchopolis New Years Feast - not as part of the menu, but shared with the populace.



The feedback was very positive, with the only criticism being that the custard was very soft/moist. That is easily overcome by serving the tart after refrigeration, rather than fresh out of the oven.

I am happy with this version of the dish, and hope to see it on a menu sometime in the future.

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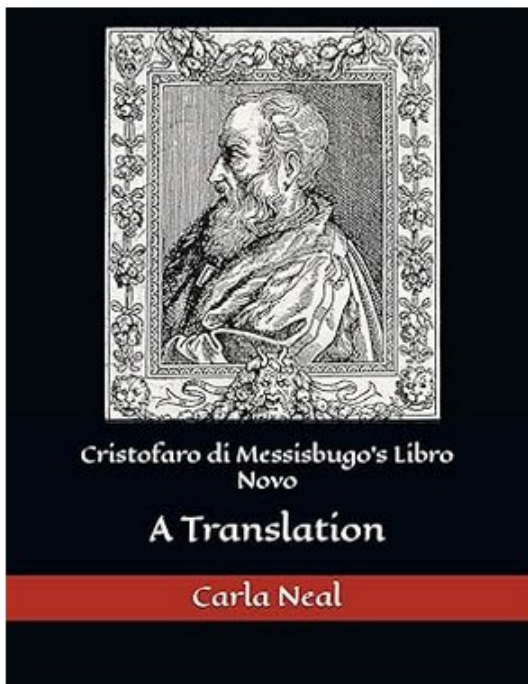
Libro Novo

By Mistress Leoba

When it comes to cooking in the Italian Renaissance, there are three major texts people think of – Maestro Martino da Rossi's *Libro de Arte Coquinara*, Bartolemeo Scappi's *Opera* and Cristofaro di Messisbugo's *Banchetti* (or *Libro Novo*).

English translations of the first two have been available for some time, but a full, easily available English translation of Messisbugo's work hasn't been.

Selections and individual recipes can be found, but us cooking SCAdians who don't know much Italian have been deprived. So, it was inevitable a SCAdian would work to translate the book.



What makes this book so important? Cristofaro Messisbugo was most likely minor nobility; much about his life isn't known. But it is known he was Chief Steward to Alfonso I and Ercole II, Dukes of Ferrara.

Both of these men held great power in medieval Italy, were significant patrons of the arts, and were two major fathers of the Renaissance.

As their Steward, Messisbugo was required to plan and execute large, lavish feasts, including menu planning, staffing and decorating the space. *Banchetti* was the book he wrote to explain his methods. *Libro Novo*, the book Carla Neal has translated, is a much later book attributed to Messisbugo, that largely copies *Banchetti*.

So this book isn't just recipes. It's an entire manual for how to run feasts worthy of one of the wealthiest courts in medieval Europe.

This includes the necessary staffing, how much cutlery and silverware you'll need, linen requirements and even suggestions for how to decorate the space and suitable entertainments.

And regarding the recipes, it's clear to me that while Messisbugo might not have been a cook, he got the input of experts in compiling the recipes, because they make sense! If you're familiar with period cookbooks, you know this isn't always the case.

But this is a book for a modern audience, so Neal has provided a great deal of context detail, including a glossary of cooking terms and historical and social information to make the Italian Renaissance accessible even to people who aren't experts in this field.

This makes it an important book for anyone interested in Renaissance Italy, not just us food nerds.

And if you're a food nerd of any SCA period, or you want to run more authentic feasts, this book deserves a place on your shelves.

Link to purchase from Amazon:

[Cristofaro di Messisbugo's Libro Novo : Neal, Carla Ann: Amazon.com.au: Books](#)

Rat on a Stick

By Mistress Kiriell du Papillon

Introduction

I created these "charming" creatures as an entry for an arts and sciences competition, the theme of which was rats and cats.

Recipe

I based them on the recipe for Herissons (hedgehogs) in *Le Viandier de Taillevent* (Vatican manuscript) which is from the first half of the 15th century.

Prenez chair crue, hachiez la plus menue que faire se peult, puis fault roisin de Daingne, fromage de gain esmié, et tout meslez ensemble avec pouldre fine, puis ayez des caillettes de moutton, eschaudez et lavez très bien, et non pas en eaeue trop chaude qu'ilz ne se retraient, et les emplez de ladicte chair hachée, et puis les coudre d'une petite brochette de boys.

Take raw flesh, chop as finely as possible, then add raisins de Digne¹, crumbled harvest cheese, and mix everything together with fine powder, then have sheep intestines, scald and washed very well, and not in water too hot for them to shrink. And stuff them with the said minced flesh, and then sew them up with a small skewer.

Redaction

I can't give you the quantities of ingredients as I just went with something between what I had, and what felt right.

- pork minced then ground
- feta crumbled finely
- finely chopped sultanas
- spice powder²
- pine nuts (for teeth)
- bacon rind for tails

I formed the mix into rats, skewered them, and used pine nuts to make teeth and a currant for an eye.

I then endored³ them with a mixture of flour, saffron, egg yolks, sandalwood and water. Saffron was the most common colouring for endoring (being to make something look gold) and sandalwood was used in this period to give food a red colour.

I was keen to get a colour that resembled the rats on a stick that you buy even now for sale in some countries.

A single coat of endoring was ok, but a second coat of the endoring paste half way through ended up making a very effective but slightly disturbingly realistic 'skin'.



Just before going into the oven

1 Raisins de Digne – Le Menagier de Paris (15th century) tells us what Raisins de Digne are : take two pounds of the raisins which be called raisins of Digne, to wit small ones, with no pips or seeds of any sort therein.

2 Fine powder – from Le Menagier de Paris : Ginger, cinnamon, cloves, grains of paradise, long pepper.

3 Endoring : 15th century English recipe for cockentrice : "endore them with yolkes of eggs, and poudre of gynger, and saffron, & ioiss of persely or malves, & draw them, and endore them a abowte in euery perty of him. "

Results

I was really pleased at how the final rats looked.

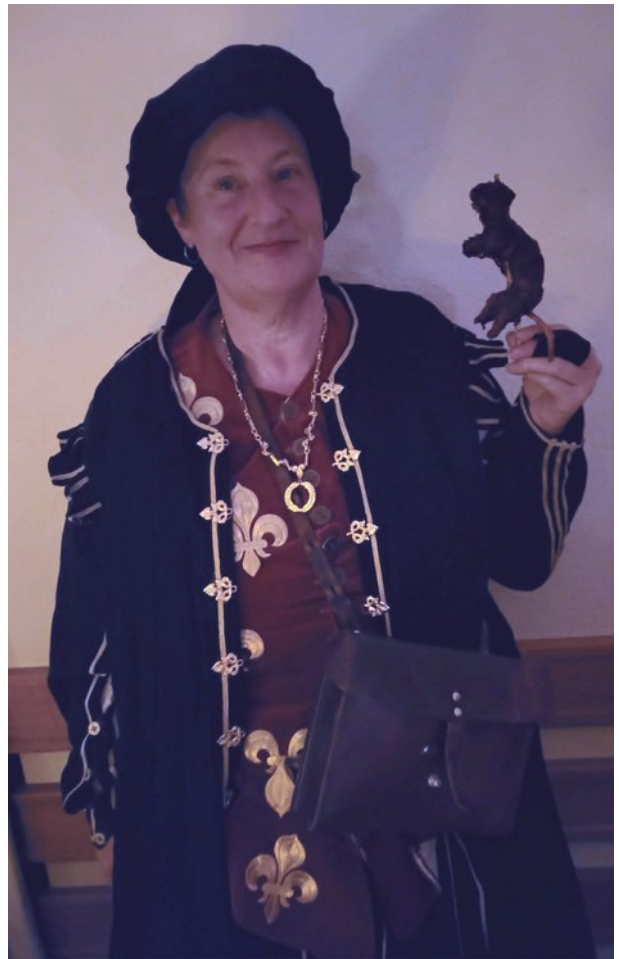


Straight out of the oven

Notes

I spent/spend a lot of time trying to figure out what 15th century French "harvest cheese" might be. Cheese ready to be eaten at harvest time? Cheese made from the milk drawn at harvest time? That is a whole other post for another day.

The other question that I had to think about was whether the original recipe is indeed for making a soteltie... or is it a recipe for cooking hedgehog meat? Who knows? The original recipe does not specify what meat it uses.



Redaction Process

When I decided to make these, I no longer had 9-12 days to leave them to soak before the event, so started with Partridge's shortcut of boiling the peels repeatedly in changes of water until they were no longer bitter. After which I mostly followed the Alexis, although he was a little unclear with the standing and resting in the honey – was that four days with stirring, three days with boiling, or some combination? And how long was the Credo (part of the Catholic Mass) in 16th century Italy?

I had three days, so both brought them to the boil and stirred them each day. As of writing, I can't exactly remember which spices I used – I have a feeling I couldn't find the ginger, and substituted long pepper because I like it, and anyway Alexis seems to imply whichever 'beste spices you can finde'.

I then dried half the peels on a rack in a low oven, turning several times. While they appeared dry, they glued themselves together thoroughly in storage. The undried, slightly sticky ones kept in a jar in the fridge are much easier to manage.

The reserved honey is deliciously scented of orange, but a bit runny. It was amazing used to backsweeten my Plum Pudding mead – some plum mead into which I infused various spices.

Redaction

Take as many orange peels as you like. I used three oranges, taking the white pith with the peel off the oranges in quarters. I then cut the peels into small wedges.

Put the peels in a small saucepan and generously cover with water. Bring to the boil. Drain, and discard the water. Repeat 3 times, or until the water no longer tastes bitter. Drain, and lay the peels out on a teatowel or rack to dry off a bit.



Return to the saucepan, and add enough honey to barely cover the peels. Bring to the boil. Let stand until the next day, and stir. Repeat 3 days.

Pour off the honey and save it for another use. Add new honey to the saucepan, enough to barely cover the peels. Boil for around 5 minutes, or less if it starts to darken.

Mix in powdered ginger, cloves and cinnamon (or other spices) to taste. For my three oranges' worth, I used about a teaspoon of cinnamon, a quarter teaspoon cloves, and half a teaspoon ground long pepper.

Allow to cool, and keep in a jar in the fridge.

Uses

These are amazing as an after-dinner treat, or on a platter with cheese or nuts.



One of Castelvetro's salad recipes has candied peel in a salad of mixed greens along with capers and a dozen other ingredients. Having tried this with capers and home-grown endive, I heartily recommend it.

References

Castelvetro, Giacomo (1614), trans. & ed. Riley, Gillian (1989). *The Fruit, Herbs and Vegetables of Italy*. Viking. ISBN 0-670-82724X

Fettiplace, Elinor (1604), ed. Spurling, Hilary (1986). *Elinor Fettiplace's Receipt Book: Elizabethan Country House Cooking*. Viking Salamander. ISBN 0-948-68103-9.

From the Administrator

Greetings Lochac.

The time has come (it's actually way overdue) for me to step down as the Guild Administrator for the Cook's Guild and call for expressions of interest in being the new Guild administrator.

The official duties of the Administrator, as set out in the Guild Charter, are as follows:

The Guild Administrator:

The administrative head shall be known as the Guild Administrator and may be of any rank. The Guild Administrator must maintain a current file of members and reply to their correspondence.

Each member's rank and progress must be recorded and filed. It is the duty of the Guild Administrator to notify members of their change in rank as it occurs. He or she should maintain and augment any Guild resources or index. The Guild Administrator reports to the Crown, the Lochac Minister of A&S and the Lochac Seneschal prior to Twelfth Night.

The Guild Administrator may appoint deputies and assistants as necessary (including, but not limited to, a newsletter editor and Web minister) and may appoint a substitute to run the Annual General Meeting if unable to attend).

The Administrative Head of the Guild should hold office for not more than two years (unless no other acceptable candidate is available. If this occurs, the administration position is renewed for a further six months until a replacement can be found). The Administrator will select their successor based on merit and ability, and shall notify the Guild members in writing of change of administration details. If possible, the Administration position is to be passed to a Guild member from a different geographic area, ensuring Kingdom-wide rotation of position.

In the event of proven incompetence or mismanagement, an Administrator may be removed from the position by a majority vote of all active members.

We are in the middle of a large overhaul of the Guild Charter and Rankings system.

If you are interested in taking on the Guild Administrator please contact the current Administrator, Mistress Leoba of Lecelade (Christine Lawrie).

Yours in Service, on behalf of the Cook's Guild,

Mistress Leoba of Lecelade

Stirring the Pot

Thoughts from the Chronicler

I'm working towards becoming a cooking Laurel, and I took part in this year's Laurel Prize Tourney at Rowany Festival. I brought four dishes along, see below.

I chose items that were easily portable and colourful enough to be noticed. The populace loved them! They were:

- Pyes of Paris, early English pork and veal pies
- Marchpane heraldry biscuits.
- "White leach" almond jelly tarts, with marzipan griffins
- My frazie strawberry custard tarts, in little crowns of ducal strawberry leaves.

The laurels felt that the colours were a bit virulent. Mistress Kiriell has challenged me to see what I can research about period food colours and (if I have to use modern colours) what shades would be most authentic. Watch this space for the detailed answer! (The short answer for England is that they had decent yellows, reds and greens and anything else is problematic...)

It's hard to do food for Laurel Prize. I live only 90 minutes away, so was able to pop home to cook things freshly, still with a big impact on my Festival.

Most people just couldn't do that. Carting boxes of food from the carpark is a pain, and it's still many hours without refrigeration. There was no real option to heat the pies – they weren't bad cold. I think I spoke to all the cooking laurels there, and an hour goes very quickly.

Master Cristoval
Guild Chronicler

