

Cooking: Subtleties, Sotelties, and Illusion Foods

Category Rules: The category defines Subtleties or Sotelties and Illusion Foods as examples of dishes that imitate or counterfeit another dish, foods which play on symbolism; foods that involve puns or wordplay; and foods that might have been served or given as presentation gifts to royalty. These are the special one of kind or one of a series of special dishes that might have a graced a Coronation or royal wedding.

An entry in this category consists of one or more dishes of illusion food and must be at least 50% edible. All inedible portions **must** be noted in the documentation. Non-edible parts should be limited to forms or support portions.

Documentation addresses the scholarship of the entry. It must contain certain elements that address the historical origins of the dish and development of a modern version versus the historical or original dish. It should:

- Demonstrate an understanding of pre-1600 historical foods, methods of cookery, philosophies, etc.
- Discuss the intended environment for the dish (ex: royal feast, manor house, holiday feast), what occasion the dish is created for as well as presentation and serving method appropriate to the period.
- Include the original recipe and translation if not in English as well as the modern working recipe. Indicate if it is an original redaction or if was developed by someone else.
- Provide clear instructions, procedures, and method of working that can be followed.

Any herbs and spices used in the dish or decorating a dish **must** be listed in the documentation with their Latin botanical names and **must** be in compliance with the Prohibited and Restricted Herbs list.

Entries in the category should be displayed as to allow suitable viewing.

Materials:

100 per cent food-grade materials must be used. Sanitary methods of preparation and preservation should be strictly adhered to even though they may not be authentic or period in terms of history. Ingredients lists must be provided with the documentation.

Generally, all ingredients should be consistent with historical time and place of the entry. Substitutions should be explained in documentation. Do not use non-food grade materials or ingredients in the edible portions because they are "period".

Commercial molds are allowed, provided they are food-safe or intended for use with food. Molds should be brought to the event to be displayed with the entry, if the judges request. The entrants may develop their own molds using 100 per cent food grade materials.

Considerations should also be made for acquisition and preparation of materials. For example, a 16th century Parisian confectioner would not be expected to grow or grind their own wheat or process their own sugar from raw materials.

Documentation (0 to 4 points):

- 0: No documentation provided with entry.
- 1: Minimal information consisting of time, place and style.
- 2: Minimal information consisting of time, place and style, plus use of general sources; reliance on tertiary sources with one or two secondary sources (ex: use of encyclopedia articles with additional use of a book or article that refers to a period source.). Materials and methods of construction used in the entry are described.
- 3: As in #2, plus a developed discussion making use of critical references; sources are largely secondary (ex: sources refer to period references; documentation discusses, compares, and contrasts the source's views). Materials and methods of construction used are described and the reasons for the choices made are discussed.

- 4: As in #3, plus explanation of original research/experiment and relation of source material to it. Primary sources (if available) and scholarly secondary sources are emphasized (ex: sources used are from the appropriate period for the entry, such as period manuscripts, paintings or artifacts). All points in the criteria are discussed briefly and clearly, with relation to this entry. Appendices are clearly marked to show what aspect of the entry they are intended to illustrate.

Methods and Materials (0 to 4 points):

- 0: Entry is completely modern with no relationship to period elements or practices.
- 1: Use of modern materials and methods to produce a work that would not be accepted in period but either bears some relationship to an authentic work or which might be useful within SCA Culture. Entry is inconsistent to period, location and persona.
- 2: Use of **both** modern materials and methods to produce a work that looks or feels authentic to the time period, location, culture and economic class for which it was constructed.
- 3: Use of **either** modern materials **or** methods to produce a work that looks or feels authentic to the time period, location, culture and economic class for which it was constructed.
- 4: Use of materials and methods entirely documentable to the period for which it was constructed, or the use of modern materials in a way that does not detract from the appearance and feels appropriate to the persona for whom the item was constructed. Substitutions of modern components and embellishment materials for materials which are no longer readily available will not be penalized so long as an effort has been made to substitute materials with a close appearance to the original. For example, the entrant may even have combined elements from several original contemporary recipes to create a new dish, provided that the documentation and research supports all the final product

Scope (0 to 6 points): Rank the ambition, **not** the success, of the entry on a scale of 0 to 6 for **each** of the following elements and average for the total Scope score (Total of element scores divided by 4). Entrants who say they cannot physically do something due to handicaps will not be penalized. (picking fresh fruit; gardening; hand-grinding if arthritic, etc.)

- Appropriateness of ingredients. Consider source of ingredients. Difficulty of finding. Attempt made to get best heirloom or artisan variety. History and understanding of the ingredient.
- Number of techniques used.
- Difficulty of techniques used (boiling vegetables vs. baking in a brick oven). Little or no preparation required. Degree entrant went to or considered in best method of preparation.
- Presentation: How complex was the visual effect to achieve? How many elements to this presentation are there? How hard is to do what was done? Easy or very complex?
- Wit: plays on medieval meaning, fanciful illusions, symbolism, puns with food.

Skill (0 to 6 points):

How well is the entry made? Rank the success of the entry on a scale of 0 to 6 points for **each** of the following elements and average for the total Skill score Consider the elements of Appearance, Aroma, Flavor and Creativity as follows. (Total of element scores divided by 3).

- Physical result (execution of technique):
 - Appearance Does it look good?
 - Flavor: Does it taste good?
 - Aroma: Does it smell good?
 - Structure: Do the separate components hold together (ex: it isn't crumbling, melting or in imminent danger of falling apart.). Can it survive normal room temperature for two hours?
- Presentation: Again appearance. A suitably medieval subject, presented in or on an appropriate vessel, attention to visual detail (finishing elements), successful use of decorous wit.

- Appropriate creativity in the combination of different elements: Is the illusion appropriate to the occasion? Is the food chosen a successful medium to complete the illusion?

Creativity (0 to 4 points): Consider the originality of the display and presentation.

- 0: Rote-copied item with mistakes added.
- 1: Rote-copied item with no innovations or documented knowledge of the range of period style.
- 2: Logical combination of period elements with some innovation of embellishment or techniques, all logical to the period context when the item is constructed.
- 3: As in #2, plus much individual interpretation and interpolation, all logical to the period context in which the item is constructed; that is, within the range of possible styles with innovative combinations which appear to fit together.
- 4: As in #3, plus each element/layer shows such consideration and choice. Elements work together in a cohesive fashion which is specific to the needs of the period culture for whom the item is constructed.

Judge's Observations (0 to 6 points): Rank the entry as a whole. How well do all the separately judged parts fit together? The entry's overall effect is judged in this section. This is the only section of the Criteria where the judge may allow her/his personality, private opinions and personal preferences to influence scoring.

Contributors: Enid Aurelia of the Tin Isles, no date given; Catlin Siobhan McNulty of Mountain Bridge, 1997; Johnnae Ilyn Lewis, Bogdan de la Brasov, 2003.

Editors: Bronwyn ferch Gwyn ap Rhys, 1987; Thorhalla Carlsdottir af Bröberg, 1997; Gwyneth Banfhidhleir, 2003.