

Cooking: Single Dish – Preserved Foods

Category Rules

Food Preservation refers to any of the methods used to prevent food from spoiling while maintaining food safety: curing, drying, smoking, cooling, fermenting, salting, pickling, or potting in ceramic or glass containers or in wooden barrels. Examples: cheeses, butter, pickles, sausages, cured and smoked meats, kippered or salt fish, dried foods, etc. created in a domestic setting to provide food at a later time. An entry consists of ONE preserved item. Requirements for entries:

- Demonstrate knowledge of modern safe food-handling practices which render a food safe and shelf-stable, as well as the period practices, and emphasize that safely and effectively preserving food represents a separate skill set beyond cooking. If making pickles, demonstrate the knowledge and history behind pre-1600 pickle making as well as the ingredients and processes which make pickled food safe.
- Demonstrate understanding of how the specific preserved food would have been used in a meal or diet of the relevant time period. Discuss the occasion for the dish (royal feast, manor house, holiday feast) as well as time-appropriate presentation and serving method. This is especially important for preserved foods. When would they have been served and under what circumstances?
- Include the original recipe and translation if not in English. Indicate if recipe is an original redaction or developed by someone else. Write a modern recipe that can be duplicated for each item with clear instructions including detailed ingredient lists, amounts, times, and temperatures. Discuss choices made as well as any variations or experimental data.
- The entry should be 100% edible. **Deviations from historical practice for food safety such as using a modern meat-curing salt rather than saltpeter will not be penalized.** 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.” It is very important that the entrant discuss the choices made in the use of ingredients, etc.
- Any herbs and spices must be listed in the documentation with their Latin botanical names and must be in compliance with the Prohibited and Restricted Herbs list. For this category, all bacteria, yeasts, molds, and starters must be labeled and stated in the documentation and recipes. Commercial starters or combinations of commercial starters must be clearly labeled. Common allergens should be clearly labeled.
- Food-safe commercial molds are allowed. Molds should be brought to the event to be displayed with the entry. The entrant may develop their own molds.

Judges should consider acquisition and preparation of materials. A 16th-century London cook would not have been expected to raise their own cattle or maintain an orchard, but one creating cheeses would have known the differences between milk obtained from cows, sheep, or goats. The judge may want to consider the research the entrant has done into the history of the dish and the overall quality and organization of the preserved item presented. Can the food preservation techniques be duplicated using the modern recipe provided by the entrant? Can one make one’s own preserved food at home using the instructions provided?

Research and Documentation (Score: 0-4 points)

- 0 No documentation provided with entry. Face-to-face judging adds very little information.
- 1 Minimal information is provided for time, place and style. Face-to-face judging adds some background.
- 2 As in #1, generalized sources are given with no emphasis on primary and/or scholarly resources. In face-to-face judging, no further understanding of the resources is evident. Materials and methods of construction of the entry are described.
- 3 As in #2, there is a good balance of resources: primary and/or scholarly sources well supported by other resources. Documentation and/or face-to-face judging provides well developed discussion of research. Materials and methods of construction are described and the reasons for the choices made are discussed.
- 4 As in #3, in-depth and extensive documentation provides a good balance of resources, emphasizing primary (if available) and/or scholarly resources backed up with a significant selection of other

resources. Documentation and/or face-to-face judging provide a good explanation of original research and experimentation related to the research. Face-to-face judging indicates a keen grasp of the research and the entrant can discuss it easily with active engagement. Appendices included in documentation (if any) help provide further pertinent information to subject and time period.

Materials and Methods (Score: 0-4 points)

- 0 Entry is completely modern with no relationship to period elements or practices.
- 1 Use of modern materials and methods to produce an item that would not be accepted in period but either bears some relationship to an authentic work or might be useful within SCA culture (ex: wines made with non-period ingredients).
- 2 Use of **both** modern materials and methods to produce a work that looks, feels, or tastes authentic to the intended time period or culture.
- 3 Use of **either** modern materials **or** methods to produce a work that looks, feels or tastes authentic to the intended time period or culture without explanation of any substituted materials.
- 4 Use of totally authentic materials and methods (hand-prepared materials, etc.) to produce a work that looks, feels, or tastes authentic to the intended time period or culture. Any substitutions and the period materials/methods are thoroughly explained. Substitutions of modern components and embellishment 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 combine elements from several original contemporary recipes to create a new dish, provided that the documentation and research supports the final product.

Scope (Score: 0-6 points for each bullet item)

Rank the **ambition**, not the success, of the entry for each of the following elements. An entry might have few ingredients but a months-long or very involved process. Achievement in every single category doesn't make an entry highly ambitious; high-scoring entries demonstrate careful thought and planning of each detail.

- Ingredients: lists are clear, choices explained, logical substitutions made where appropriate. Attempt to recreate historical characteristics of ingredients.
- Preservation and processing methods: steps are clear, choices explained, safe and logical adaptations made where appropriate. Attempt to recreate historical preservation methods.
- Presentation: complexity of visual effect, number of elements, etc. Preserved items often appear simple while they may require long periods of intense work and rest.

Skill (Score: 0-6 points for each bullet item)

How well is the entry made? Rank the **success** of the entry for each of the following elements.

- Physical result: appearance, flavor, aroma, fusion of individual of seasonings and flavors.
- Preparation: is the preserved item appropriately prepared and preserved?
- Handling of ingredients: seasonings; initial preparation (grinding, dicing, crushing, whipping, shredding, etc.); temperature regulation (hot stays hot, cold stays cold).
- Experimental data: is evidence and data (if trials were completed only) interpreted and communicated accurately and effectively?

Ingenuity (Score: 0-4 points)

Judge the ingenuity of the entry. Was the entrant resourceful and inventive in the approach to creating their entry? Does the entry reflect the entrant's vision of period context? Is original thought, contemplation, interpretation, and vision evident according to the entrant's period?

Judge's Observation (Score: 0-6 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 judges may allow their personality, private opinions, and personal preferences to influence scoring.