

Food Classes

Baking and Confectionary

These classes can include anything from baking a honey cake with specific ingredients to honey fudge and chocolates.

The size, weight, and number of items must correspond with the schedule – always check and recheck! If a recipe is specified, make sure you follow it, cakes from the same recipe can vary enormously!

All food classes need to be produced to a suitable standard for sale to the public. A The list of ingredients and/or recipe must be supplied.

All entries will be tasted by the judge.

It is worth practising your baked items especially if you have been provided with a recipe to follow.

Use a strongly flavoured honey so that it can be smelt and tasted after cooking.

It is acceptable to use Gluten Free flour in all recipes but practise them first.

Biscuits, sweets, etc are judged on appearance, flavour and texture. Biscuits should be crisp, with a reasonable thickness, an attractive colour and even surface.

Cakes are evaluated on; appearance, uniformity (of mixing and baking), moistness, texture, aroma, flavour, and influence of honey on the finished product.

What the judge is looking for

The tin size is very important for cakes as the wrong size can result in an under or overcooked cake. The judge will cut the items in half, so anything that is under or overcooked will be spotted

- Flavour and aroma
- Evenly distributed ingredients
- Well risen and evenly baked - no burned edges or uncooked middles. No large air bubbles or crumbling edges
- Biscuits should be crisp; cookies can be softer.
- Smooth sides, indicating a well buttered tin
- No cooling rack marks on the top of the cake
- Displayed on a plain plate
- Protected by a transparent covering, such as a cake dome or clingfilm

Preserves

Preserves is a catch-all term for jams, marmalades, conserves, chutneys and others.

Jams are made with pieces of fruit or pulp, sugar and usually pectin (a gelling/thickening agent). Jams have a firm but spreadable consistency. The fruit is typically chopped or crushed and slowly cooked with the sugar until it thickens.

While jams use fruit and pulp, marmalade incorporates the zest and rind of citrus fruits. Unlike most fruit preserves, marmalade doesn't need added pectin; the citrus rinds themselves naturally provide all that's needed for it to set.

Chutneys consist of pieces of fruits and/or vegetables, with added vinegar, spices and sugar to help preservation. These are then cooked slowly and gently until they form a jam-like consistency, though the thickness will depend on the ingredients used.

Pickles consists of whole fruits or vegetables that have been added to a liquid solution, usually sweetened vinegar or brine. Salt, sugar and other ingredients are then added to the vinegar or brine solution to create extra flavour.

Preserves are marked on a combination of standards; container, cover, label, appearance and preserve colour, quantity, flavour, consistency, clarity, texture of fruit/vegetable and aroma.

General advice

- Jars must be clear glass with no commercial markings, clean and well-polished
- Use new lids, twist tops with a plastic lining are best for vinegar preserves
- All preserves should be labelled stating the contents together with the day, month and year of making
- Labels should be used and attached as per the show schedule
- A twist top or a wax disc and cellophane cover may be used for jams, jellies and marmalade – check the show schedule for requirements
- Pickles and chutneys are best left to mature for 2 or 3 months before showing

What is the judge looking for?

Jams

- Colour should be bright, even and characteristic
- No scum or foreign bodies, mould or sugar crystals
- Jam is within 3mm of top of jar
- Fruit evenly distributed, not too many stones
- Skins tender
- Consistency 'jellified' not runny or sticky, no loose liquid or syrup
- Flavour full, fresh and characteristic of the fruit

Jellies

- Should be brilliantly clear with no pulp, haze or scum
- Colour should be even, bright and characteristic
- Jar is filled within 3mm of top of jar
- No air bubbles or scum on surface
- Consistency should tremble, but hold its shape
- No air bubbles
- Flavour true of fruit, full and well balanced

Marmalade

- If peel is included in the preserve, it should be tender and uniformly cut
- Colour will vary according to type, but bright and characteristic
- Jar is filled within 3mm of top of jar
- Consistency 'jellified', not runny or too firm
- Flavour slightly bitter, characteristic and true of fruit used

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