

MYSTERIOUS AFAN CUDD

COOKING AND TWO MEDIEVAL RECIPES

People in the Middle Ages prepared their food over an open fire, often shared by many households. People knew of the danger of an open fire, so cooking areas were usually in a separate building. Only later castles and noble houses had stoves and ovens of their own.

The main foods were bread and cereal. Poor people usually ate coarse barley bread and beans, and porridge made of barley, oats, and rye. Food was a way of showing how rich you were. Wheat was only for the rich, and rich people ate fresh meat from hunting, with exotic spices.

The two most common cooking methods were roasting meat on an iron rod above the fire, and cooking everything in a large pot or cauldron which was also placed above the flames of the fire.



A cook at the hearth with a ladle; woodcut from the first printed cookbook in German, *Kuchenmaistrey*, 1485. image courtesy of Wikimedia.

MYSTERIOUS AFAN CUDD



The Decameron, Flanders, 1432. CC Image source: Wikimedia.

The roasting-spit, called a *bêr*, was used to cook pieces of meat. The rod was pushed through the pieces and placed on a pair of firedogs near the flames. The meat was slowly roasted and the rod was turned now and then to cook the meat thoroughly.

Cauldrons and large pots were also placed on the fire to cook pottages and soups. In these pots, some pieces of meat were boiled with vegetables in a liquids such as wine, milk, and even blood.

Cawl, which we still eat in Wales today, dates back to the 11th century.

It was simple broth of meat (most likely lamb) and vegetables. It could be cooked slowly over the course of the day whilst the family was out working the fields. Leftovers could be topped up with fresh vegetables, sometimes over the course of weeks.

Material adapted from:

<http://www.gutorqlyn.net/gutoswales/cy/index.php>

<https://medievalbritain.com/type/medieval-life/occupations/medieval-cook/>

MYSTERIOUS AFAN CUDD

TWO MEDIEVAL RECIPES

This recipe, for “**Charlet**”, is from the 1430 book *Liber Cure Cocorum* (The Art of Cookery), written in northern English dialect, probably from Lancashire.

Ingredients

Pork
Eggs
Milk
Saffron
Ale

Preparation

*Take sweetest milk, that you may have,
Color it with saffron, so God you save;
Take fresh pork and seethe it well,
And hew it small every part;
Beat eggs, and put thereto;
Set it over the fire, then
Boil it and stir lest it burn;
When it boils up, you shall cool it
With a little ale, so have you bliss;
When it is enough, you set it down,
And keep it lest it be too brown.*



Medieval peasant meal. Artist Unknown
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medieval_peasant_meal.jpg

MYSTERIOUS AFAN CUDD

This recipe is from the same book: “**Blancmange**”.

Blancmange is a sweet dessert usually made with milk or cream (in this case with a bit of chicken too!) and thickened with gelatin or corn starch. It's served cold and often flavoured with almonds.

Ingredients

Rice
Almond Milk
Chicken
Sugar
Almonds

Preparation

*Take rice and look you wash them clean,
And through a strainer you strain them;
Mix them with almond milk anon.
Take flesh of capons or hen [a] good quantity,
Tease it small, as I teach you;
Put the rice in the milk over the fire,
Let it boil of necessity*

*Thicken it with teased flesh indeed;
Season it with sugar, and garnish
With fried almonds the lord's dish.*



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bayeux-feast01.jpg>

Text adapted from websites:

<http://www.gutorglyn.net/gutoswales/gwledd-bwyd-sbeisys.php>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Welsh_dishes#CITEREFWebb2012

<https://www.medievalists.net/2016/05/swan-you-say-medieval-feasting/>

Other recipes from: The Medieval Cookbook by Maggie Black: The British Museum 2012