**COOKERY Recommended marking scheme**

**(For exhibits including bread, cakes, scones, biscuits and pastries.)**

Each item is marked on its own merits, out of 2O marks. The majority of marks are given for flavour/aroma, because this is the hallmark of home cooking.

External appearance 4

colour, shape , uniformity,Internal condition 4

depth of crust, texture, distribution of ingredients

Flavour/aroma 12

**Flavour and Aroma**

The flavour/aroma should be characteristic for the item judged, e.g. there should be no ‘off ’ flavours or staleness, and no pronounced odours (rancidity, mustiness, yeastiness, etc). There should be an average acceptance of spices, flavourings and salt. A judge will observe aroma as well as taste, and will not be influenced by strong personal

preferences in flavours.

Guidelines (flavour marks out of 12)

12 Excellent (100%); a good balance of flavours, true to type

11 Very good, but lacking in one aspect of flavour

10 Good, but lacking in more than one aspect of flavour

8-9 Average, but lacking in several aspects of flavour

6-7 Below average, bland, flavourless, untypical

Below 5 Not acceptable (NA): not edible, uncooked, off flavours. If it is not acceptable, the exhibit will NOT be marked.

**CAKES**

The schedule will ask for the type of cake to be exhibited. A recipe or tin size may be specified. When small cakes are to be exhibited, the type and size are stated.

General points for all cakes

• Cakes well-risen, even in shape and baking.

• In proportion (depth width/length).

• Sides smooth, indicating well lined tin.

• Lining papers removed.

• No cooling rack marks on top of cake.

• Texture will vary according to type (wholemeal flour will produce slightly closer texture than white flour).

• Crust thin and even.

• Any fruit evenly distributed, no signs of flour pockets.

• Flavour true to type, well blended

• No untypical flavour predominating, no off flavours, no uncharacteristic strong spice flavour.

• Unless schedule states otherwise, cakes should be presented on a plate with a sweet doiley

Small rich cakes (Queen cakes, Fairy cakes, etc)

• May be baked in bun tins or paper cases.

• Uniform in size, shape and colour

• Light in weight and with tops slightly peaked.

• Texture even, light and springy.

• Any fruit evenly distributed

• Top flat without air bubbles or crumbly edges.

• Both halves same thickness (a good idea to weigh mixture into tins).

• Texture fine, even.

• Flavour delicate, characteristic, with no strong flavour predominating

• Top flat without air bubbles or crumbly edges.

• Both halves same thickness (a good idea to weigh mixture into tins).

• Texture fine, even.

• Flavour delicate, characteristic, with no strong flavour predominating

• Made by creaming method.

• Schedule may specify tin size, or number of eggs to use.

• May be baked in one or two tins.

• No cooling rack marks on top or bottom surface.

• Traditional filling raspberry jam, sufficient and evenly spread.

• Light sprinkling of caster sugar on top.

• Pale golden brown in colour, evenly baked.

**SCONES**

The schedule may specify number and type (fruit, plain, cheese, savoury). Individual scones would usually be expected unless the schedule states a round of scones.

• Plain mixture, rubbed in, up to one-quarter fat to flour.

• Milk is traditionally used for mixing, however recipes can state yogurt or buttermilk.

• Eggs – optional.

• Best results from using a raising agent made from 2 parts cream of tartar mixed together with 1 part bicarbonate of soda.

•Kneading marks to be avoided.

• Scones even in shape, size and colour.

• Suitable size is 5-6 cms diameter (2-21/2 inches), almost as tall as round.

• Should stand erect (take care not to twist cutter).

• Flat on top.

• Pale golden colour.

• Texture light, springy, more like a bread (not short like cake).

• No predominant flavour of raising agent, but good true flavour to reflect type.

• Judged by breaking at equator to view texture and avoid compacting.

Plain scones

• Plain cutter but, if a little sugar added, a fluted cutter should be used.

• No glaze, but may be dusted with flour before baking.

Fruit/sweet scones

• Fluted cutter.

• No glaze, but may be dusted with flour before baking.

• No overcooked fruit on surfaces

**PASTRIES**

The schedule should specify type and use of pastry, possibly the filling and the number of items. For example, one plate apple tart – short crust pastry, six sausage rolls – puff pastry.

General points for all pastries

• All pastries contain flour, fat, salt and water but differ in the proportion of ingredients and method of incorporation of the fat. Pastries should be presented on a plate, with a doiley if sweet, and a dish paper if savoury

(unless schedule specifies otherwise).

• Savoury items may be garnished with parsley, or a garnish reflecting the ingredients (for example, salmon quiche could be garnished with lemon/cucumber/fennel). Garnish, if appropriate, will be included in the external mark.

• Pastries should be evenly baked.

• Base pastry should be completely cooked through.

• The texture should be typical of the type.

• Plain flour should be used for all pastries except suet pastry.

Mince pies

• Individual pies, identical in size and shape.

• Use shortcrust pastry with a full-size pastry top.

• Light golden in colour, cooked underneath. • Light dusting of icing sugar.

• A flavoursome mincemeat filling. • Plain flour, half fat to flour.

• Texture light and short, not hard and brittle.

Jam tarts/tartlets

• Individual tarts, identical in size and shape.

• Use same jam unless schedule states assorted.

• Jam level smooth and cooked in pastry, not overflowing.

• Jam tarts do not have lemon curd or marmalade filling.

• Pastry 4mm (1/6 inch) thick, not too deep.

• Light golden in colour, cooked underneath.

• A flavoursome jam

**PRESERVATION**

Preservation is a method of ‘keeping’ fruits and vegetables at their best, for use until the next season of production. Containers are sealed to preserve items for this length of time or longer. Fruit curds, mincemeat and uncooked chutneys and relishes are not accepted as true preserves as they do not have this lengthy keeping ability (see further notes in this section), but are marked using the same recommended marking scheme.

***Recommended marking scheme***

For exhibits including jams, jellies, marmalade, bottled fruit, fruit syrups and squash, vinegar preserves and herbs.

Each item is marked on its own merits, out of 20 marks.

**External standard**

Container, cover, label, appearance 2

**Internal standard**

Colour and quantity 5

**Quality**

Consistency and texture 6

**Flavour and aroma**

7

**General guidelines**

Entry should be correct by the schedule (for example, size of jar, contents).

**Covers for jams, jellies, marmalades**

The first thing the judge looks for is a seal. This shows that the item is actually worthy of the term preserved.

Lids should always be put on freshly potted sugar preserves, immediately each jar is filled, when hot.

When making the preserve, the temperature should not drop below 82ºC (180ºF) to ensure that yeasts and moulds do not survive. A twist top or plastic cover will pop when opened, if there is a true seal. Avoid honey jars with screw tops, as the thread does not produce a good seal. The new twist tops, however, do give a seal.

**A seal can only be achieved by;**

• a new twist top or

• a new pliable press-on cover , with a traditional jam jar or

• a waxed disc with cellophane cover

**Note**

A wax disc, placed smooth side down, when carefully trimmed to fit the rim of the jar and the surface of the preserve, will cause an airtight seal when cooled, and only needs a cellophane cover to protect from dust. This should never be put on a tepid preserve as the moist air trapped may cause spoilage. Always put cellophane cover on when completely cold.

**Recycled jars and lids**

Plain jars must be used for showing preserves. Jars and lids bearing trade names should not be used for shows as this contravenes the Trades Description Act. If twist top lids are used for showing, they must be new and plain, as old lids do not always give a good seal. The container and cover should be correct, and suitable for the preservation of

the contents. (Check appropriate section for each preserve.) If no seal of preservation is present, the item is not acceptable (NA) and is not marked further. (Often an exhibitor will be tempted to test the seal before

exhibiting, and thus destroy it!) The containers should be clean and unblemished. A little methylated spirit will always give sparkle to a jar, but be careful not to taint fruit curds, which are not sealed.

Labels should be plain, neat and straight and of suitable size for the container.

Place label between the seams of the jar. Label should state contents and day, month and year of making.

An additional cover, (such as gingham) and label which is decorative, are sometimes used to complement a theme in a co-operative exhibit.

***JAMS***

• Jars filled to within 3 mm (⅛ inch) of top. Fill to the top and allow for shrinkage.

• Schedule may state size of jar and type of fruit to be used.

• Colour bright, even and characteristic.

• No scum or foreign bodies, mould or sugar crystals.

• 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***

• Schedule often asks for small jar approximately 225g (1/2lb)

• Should be brilliantly clear (with darker jelly, easier to see if sample removed by judge).

• No pulp, haze or scum.

• Colour even, bright and characteristic.

• Consistency should tremble, but hold its shape.

• No air bubbles.

• Flavour true of fruit, full and well balanced.

***MARMALADE***

Jelly marmalade is often in a class of its own because of its different nature to thick marmalade.

• Based on citrus fruits, but other ingredients (for example, ginger) may be added unless schedule states otherwise. Label accordingly.

• Colour will vary according to type, but bright and characteristic.

• Consistency ‘jellified’, not runny or too firm.

• No air bubbles, or scum.

• Peel tender, uniformly cut and distributed.

• Traditionally peel should be sliced. Minced peel would lose marks, unless specified in schedule.

• Flavour slightly bitter, characteristic and true of fruit used

***FRUIT CURD***

• This contains eggs and butter and is cooked at a low temperature, therefore it is not a true preserve.

• In co-operative exhibits fruit curds must not be included as a preserve item.

• Be careful if schedule asks for a fruit preserve!

• Fruit curd must be covered with a ‘breathing’ top (that is, a wax circle and cellophane top). Curd does not achieve high enough temperatures for wax to seal, but disc forms double dust cover.

• Twist tops and pliable tops are not acceptable (NA).

• Colour bright, characteristic and even.

• Consistency spreadable, but not runny or rough.

• No egg spots, peel, scum, sugar crystals or air bubbles.

• Flavour fresh and well balanced, with no greasy taste.

• Must state date when made. • Should be refrigerated and consumed within 4 weeks

***VINEGAR PRESERVES***

**General notes**

• The schedule may state type and size of jar to be exhibited.

• **Keep at least two months before showing.**

• Covers for vinegar preserves must prevent evaporation and should not be liable to corrosion due to presence of vinegar (for example, twist tops with plastic lining or cotton cloth dipped in melted wax).

• Lids must be a good fit, but in the case of cold vinegar preserves they will not always have a seal that pops when opened.

• Do not use waxed disc and a cellophane cover.

• See general notes on vinegar preserves.

• Jar should have a suitable neck for getting pickles out.

• Correctly filled 12 mm (1/2 inch) vinegar over pickle, 12 mm (1/2 inch) headspace between vinegar and lid.

• Colour of all pickles is better if white vinegar is used rather than malt.

• Flavour smooth, mature and well balanced.

**Clear pickle**

• May be either single or mixed vegetables in clear spiced vinegar.

• Bright in colour, especially beetroot and red cabbage.

• Vegetables should be crisp (except beetroot, which should be tender).

**Sweet pickle**

• Consists of fruit in sweetened spiced vinegar.

• Rich in colour.

• Fruit should be tender, in sparkling syrupy vinegar.

**Piccalilli** (a mustard pickle)

• Consists of mixed vegetables, pickle – flavour and colour with turmeric and mustard, in a smooth sauce.

• Bright, characteristic, with vegetables crisp.

• Uniform pieces of vegetables.

Note: Runner bean pickle is often called chutney, but is actually a mustard pickle

***CHUTNEY***

• **See general notes on vinegar preserves**.

• Label should state hot or mild.

• Colour bright and even throughout.

• Dark chutneys should be dark and bright, but not muddy.

• Jars filled to 4mm (1/8 inch) from top of jar to exclude air as much as possible and to allow for shrinkage.

• Consistency reasonably firm, and uniform.

• No large pieces of onion, skin, cores, or stones.

• No air bubbles or free vinegar.

• No repotting.

• **Mature flavour improved by being potted for two to three months.**

• Flavour blended well, and characteristic of ingredients used.