

Advice: Domestic Section

Always follow any advice notes given in the schedule!

Baking

- The majority of marks will be awarded for flavour and aroma. These should be characteristic of the class. There should be no off-flavours/ odours and no hint of staleness.
- Spices, flavourings and seasonings should be balanced for an average palate.

Cakes

- Take note if a particular recipe or tin size has been specified. Cupcakes may be baked in bun tins or paper cases.
- Lining paper should be removed from your cake, but cupcakes may be displayed in their paper cases.
- There should be no cooling rack marks on the top of your cake(s).
- Unless otherwise stated, display your cake(s) on a plate. A doily may be used.
- All cakes should be well risen with an even shape and colour.
- All cupcakes in a set should be uniform in size, shape and colour.
- Rich cakes, made by the creaming method, should have an almost flat top.
- Plain cakes, made by the rubbing-in method, should have a slightly domed top and slight cracking is permissible.
- Cupcakes should have a slightly peaked top.
- Aim for a thin and even crust.
- Burnt fruit on the outside of the cake should be avoided.
- All ingredients should be well mixed and evenly distributed.
- The texture should be even and moist, neither wet, heavy nor soggy.

Cake decoration

- Undecorated cakes should be simply presented and should be characteristic of their class.
- Design, colour and neatness of execution will be considered when judging decorated cakes/ cupcakes.
- Flavour and consistency of icing will be considered - should be suitable for the flavour of the cake(s).
- A variety of techniques may be used for decorating your cupcakes - assorted designs and flavours demonstrate a range of skills and this may be rewarded.

Savoury scones

- Kneading marks should be avoided.
- A diameter of 5 - 6 cm is recommended, and scones should be almost as tall as they are round.
- Use a plain cutter for savoury scones, and do not twist the cutter when cutting.
- Aim for a flat top and golden colour. The set should be even in shape, size and colour.
- Texture should be light and springy.
- The scones should have a distinct savoury flavour with no predominate flavour of raising agent.
- Savoury scones should have a glazed finish. Cheese scones should be sprinkled with grated cheese.

Preserves

- The majority of marks will be awarded for flavour and aroma, closely followed by consistency, texture, colour and quantity.
- The container, cover, label and external appearance will also be considered. Take note of the type and size of jar specified in the schedule.

Jam and Marmalade

- To avoid yeasts and moulds growing, the temperature of the preserve should not be allowed to fall below 82°C whilst making.
- Jars should be shown filled to within 3mm of the top - fill the jars and allow for shrinkage during cooling.
- The jar must be properly sealed with a wax disc whilst still hot. Wax discs should be placed face down and trimmed to fit the rim of the jar. The wax disc must have formed an airtight seal upon cooling.
- Do not be tempted to test your seal prior to judging - the seal will be broken and thus your preserve disqualified!
- The cellophane dust cover should be added once the preserve has cooled completely.
- Make sure that your jars are clean and unblemished.
- Labels should be neat, straight and in proportion with the size of the jar. Labels should be placed between the seams of the jar.
- Labels should state the contents and the date of making

Jam

- The colour should be bright, even and characteristic of the fruit used.
- No scum, foreign bodies or sugar crystals.
- Fruit should be evenly distributed with few stones.
- Jam should be properly jellified with no loose liquid, neither runny nor sticky. The skin should be tender.
- Jam should taste fresh and be full of the characteristic flavour of the fruit used.

Marmalade

- Marmalade must be based on citrus fruits, but may contain additional ingredients.
- Colour should be bright and characteristic of the fruit used.
- No air bubbles and no scum.
- Marmalade should be properly jellified, neither runny nor too firm.
- Peel should be evenly sliced and distributed. (Peel should not be minced.)
- Marmalade should taste slightly bitter and be full of the characteristic flavour of the fruit used.

Honey

- Jars and (new) lids should be clean. Lids should be free from honey and not rusted.
- Honey should be free from debris, dust, froth and bubbles.
- Granulated honey should be thicker.
- Flavour and aroma are important, and there should be no external odours.
- For further advice contact the Show Secretary.

Chutney

- Cover must prevent evaporation and must not be liable to corrosion in the presence of vinegar. For example, well fitting twist tops with plastic lining or pliable plastic jar lids.
- In addition to the type of chutney, ideally the label should indicate whether it is hot or mild.
- Jars should be shown filled to 12mm from the top of the jar.
- True chutney should be allowed to mature after potting, ideally for 2 - 3 months. Do not re-pot.
- Colour should be bright and even throughout, even for a dark chutney.
- Chutney should have a reasonably firm and uniform consistency, with no free vinegar. No large pieces of onion, skin, core or stones etc.
- No air bubbles.
- Chutney should have a well blended, characteristic flavour.
- Uncooked or semi-cooked chutneys are allowed, but this must be noted on the label. These should have been made shortly before the show and refrigerated. Do not use airtight jars because fermentation may lead to explosion. Should have an attractive flavour and interesting texture.

Mincemeat

- Mincemeat should be made well in advance of the show to allow the flavours to develop, ideally at least 2 months.
- Ingredients should be in good condition in order to avoid fermentation.
- Jars should be filled to the top and mincemeat well pressed down to exclude as much air as possible.
- If the mincemeat is cooked, a wax disc should be applied whilst hot. A cover should be added once cooled.
- The mincemeat should not be allowed to dry out - a plastic snap-on top may help.
- Mincemeat should be stored in a cool place such as a refrigerator.