

Advice: Domestic Section, Summer 2024

Your entries don't need to be perfect. Don't be afraid, just 'have a go'!

The more entries the better the show.

- Check that your entries comply with all the requirements mentioned in the schedule.
- Please don't hesitate to ask the Show Secretary if there is anything that you don't understand.
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- When asked to provide a list of ingredients, quantities are not required.

Your list of ingredients may be typed or clearly handwritten. Please do not include your name. The judge should not be able to identify an entrant from their ingredients list.

Please display your ingredients list next to your entry.

- Much of this advice is based upon the recommendations in '*On with the Show: An NFWI Handbook for Exhibitors, Judges and Show Committees*' but with some adaptations. The **BGS Show Schedule**, and the advice notes below, **should always take precedence**.

Baking

- Unless specified, bake sizes are at the discretion of the exhibitor.
- Where recipes are provided, **direct like-for-like replacements may be used to avoid specific allergens**. For example, egg replacer, vegan butter or gluten-free flour.
- Where more than one item is specified, flavour and appearance should be consistent across the set.
- The majority of marks will be awarded for flavour and aroma. No off-flavours/ odours and no hint of staleness.
- The predominant flavour/ aroma should be characteristic of the bake and of any ingredients mentioned in the recipe title.
- Spices, flavourings and seasonings should be balanced for an average palate.
- Evenly baked. No burned edges or uncooked middles.
- Unless otherwise stated, bakes should be displayed on a plain plate, doily optional.
- Bakes should be protected by a transparent covering, such as a cake dome or clingfilm, and labelled with the recipe title.

Baguette

- Authentic baguettes should be made from only water, wheat flour, yeast and salt.
- The salt is required to develop a good flavour but the loaf should not be salty.
- The dough should be shaped into a straight stick shape - the baked baguette should be at least 30cm long.
- The top of the loaf should be slashed before baking - the number and position of the slashes is up to you.
- The crust should be crisp and lightly caramelised.

- The crumb should be tender but not damp; spring back when pressed; and exhibit the large, irregular holes that show it has been allowed to slowly ferment and develop flavour.
- Avoid over-proving which may produce a sour yeast flavour and aroma.
- May be displayed on a small platter or board instead of a plate.

Plain Scones

- Ideally, your scones should be freshly baked on the day of the Show.
- Avoid a predominant flavour of raising agent!
- Avoid kneading marks.
- Scones should be even in shape and size.
- A straight cutter, 5-6cm diameter, should be used unless a little sugar is added. If a little sugar has been added then a fluted cutter should be used.
- Avoid twisting the cutter to help the scones to rise straight up.
- The scones may be dusted with flour before baking. No glaze.
- Ideally, the scones should be almost as tall as they are wide, with a flat top and baked to a pale golden colour. The texture should be light and springy.

Quiches

- **Shortcrust pastry** flan base:
 - Half fat to plain flour.
 - Texture light and short, not hard and brittle.
 - Even thickness - not too thick.
- Savoury **egg custard** filling:
 - Cooked together with the pastry.
 - Added ingredients should be flavoursome and complement one another. Uniformly chopped/ diced. Carefully seasoned.
- Pastry case should be well filled without overspilling.
- Evenly baked and the base pastry completely cooked through.
- **May be garnished** with parsley, or a garnish reflecting the ingredients. Any garnish will be included in the marking of the external appearance.
- Don't forget to **list the main ingredients** next to your bake.

Cakes - general

- All ingredients should be well mixed and evenly distributed.
- No **cooling rack marks** on the top of your cake.

- Cakes should be well risen with an even shape and colour.
- The crust should be thin and even.
- No raising agent tunnels. No large air bubbles nor crumbling edges.
- Cakes may be rich and moist but should be neither wet, heavy nor soggy.

Butterfly cakes

- Baked by an **exhibitor who has never been placed** 1st, 2nd or 3rd in the Domestic Section at a BGS Show.
- Small sponge cakes baked in paper cake cases.
- Tops cut off and divided into two pieces, then fixed to the cakes with buttercream at an angle to resemble butterfly wings.
- Any flavour of cake and buttercream.
- The texture of the cake should be even, light and springy.
- Buttercream should be smooth - not split or grainy.
- Additional decoration allowed.

Shortbread

- Made according to the **set recipe** on page 23 of the schedule.
- Baked to an even pale golden brown.
- The base should be smooth and not too pale in colour.
- Crisp texture.
- Should be able to taste the butter - no off flavour!

Carrot cake

- Your cake recipe may contain any combination of ingredients but you should be able to taste the carrots.
- Be careful when adding spices - their flavour should not predominate.
- Well mixed with no pockets of flour and no sunken fruit if used.
- Smooth sides, indicating a well lined tin. Lining paper should be removed from your cake prior to display.
- Burnt fruit on the outside of the cake should be avoided if possible.
- Cream cheese icing and decoration optional but will be included in the marking if used.
- Cream cheese icing should be smooth, not split or grainy. Should have a tangy flavour, not too sweet.
- Don't forget to **list your main ingredients** next to your bake.

Decorated Swiss roll

- Use a 'whisking in method' to make your **fatless sponge** mixture.

- Ingredients should be thoroughly combined - no pockets of flour.
- Textures should be even and spongy - not tough or rubbery.
- Your **decorative design** must be **baked within the surface of the sponge**. For example, [Kim-Joy's recipe for raspberry swiss roll with decorative bees and flowers | Cake | The Guardian](#)
- Your sponge should be well filled with **any flavour of jam** but do not overfill. **No cream or buttercream.**
- Sides should be neatly trimmed prior to rolling.
- Try to avoid surface cracks when rolling your sponge.
- Ideally, the rolled sponge should go through two complete rotations. Present your roll with the join at the bottom.
- The ends of your roll should be neatly trimmed.

Oldbury tarts

- Traditional single-portion **raised pies** made with a **sweet hot water crust** top and bottom.
- Hot water pastry crust:
 - Firm pastry made by heating water, melting the fat (lard or vegetarian equivalent), bringing the mixture to a boil, and finally incorporating the plain flour.
 - **Hand-raised or cooked in a mould.**
 - Well proportioned, even shape.
 - It is accepted that a hand-raised pie may sag slightly during the cooking process.
 - Evenly baked to a golden brown and the base completely cooked through.
 - Glazed and may be decorated.
- Fresh, frozen or tinned **gooseberries** may be used for the filling.
- For recipe suggestions, visit www.severnbitess.com/2021/05/25/oldbury-tarts

Fudge

- Any flavour of fudge but all 5 squares should be the same flavour.
- Creamy taste.
- Firm, not soft or syrupy. Not hard, brittle or crumbly.
- Smooth texture, not grainy or lumpy.
- Pieces should be uniform in size - approximately 2-2.5cm squares. Alternative shape permitted but must be consistent.

Preserves

- **Jars:** standard clear glass, labelled with the recipe title and the preserving date. Avoid fingermarks.
- **Labels:** plain, neat, straight and in proportion with the jar. Place the label between any seams on the jar.

- Jars should be shown filled to within 3mm of the brim.
- Sterilised jars should be filled whilst they are still warm and the preserve is hot. Seal with a wax disc with wax facing down. To prevent the growth of yeasts and moulds in your preserves, ensure that the temperature of the preserve does not drop below 82°C (180°F) before sealing.
- A cellophane dust cover should be added once the preserve has cooled. Dampen one side of the cellophane cover before applying it to the jar with the damp side facing up. Secure with an elastic band.
- No additional lids or covers are allowed.

Jam

- **Jars: 340-454g** (12-16oz, approx. 300-400ml).
- Made from one or more types of **soft fruit and/or stone fruit** that are typically **harvested in the summer**.
- Blackberries, plums and damsons will not be considered summer fruits. Jam made with these fruits should be saved for the Autumn Show.
- Fruit evenly distributed. Stones avoided where possible. Any fruit skins should be tender.
- **Flavour:** full, fresh and characteristic of the fruit used.
- **Colour:** bright, even and characteristic of the fruit used.
- No scum, mould, foreign bodies, or sugar crystals.
- **Consistency:** consistent jellified consistency - no loose liquid or syrup.

Jellies

- **Jars: 225-454g** (8-16oz, approx. 200-400ml).
- Made from one or more types of **soft fruit and/or stone fruit** that are typically **harvested in the summer**.
- Blackberries, plums and damsons will not be considered summer fruits. Jelly made with these fruits should be saved for the Autumn Show.
- **Flavour:** full, well balanced and characteristic of the fruit used.
- **Colour:** even, bright and characteristic of the fruits used.
- Brilliantly clear with no pulp, haze or scum. No air bubbles.
- **Consistency:** soft enough to tremble but must still hold its shape.

Marmalade

- **Jars: 340-454g** (12-16oz, approx. 300-400ml).
- Made from any type of **citrus fruit(s) besides oranges**. **Orange may be included** but should not be the predominant citrus flavour. Additional **non-citrus flavours may be included**, for example ginger.
- **No orange marmalade;** save this for the Autumn Show.
- Peel uniformly cut (sliced not minced), tender and evenly distributed.

- **Flavour:** characteristic of the fruit used and slightly bitter.
- **Colour:** bright and characteristic of the fruit used.
- No air bubbles or scum.
- **Consistency:** uniformly jellified - not runny or too firm.

Fruit syrup, squash or cordial

- **Bottles:** standard clear glass, **any volume**. Avoid fingermarks.
- Made from one or more types of fruit.
- Bottles should be shown filled to within 2.5cm of the brim.
- Sterilised bottles should be filled whilst they are still warm and the drink is hot. Seal immediately with a screwtop or cork.
- For long keeping, the drink should be sterilised in the bottle.
- Alternatively, keep the drink refrigerated and label it with “consume within a week”.
- **Labels:** plain, neat, straight and in proportion with the bottle. Place the label between any seams.
- Labelled with the recipe title and the preserving date. **Indicate if dilution is required** with still or sparkling water.

Bottled fruit

- **Bottles or jars:** standard clear glass, **any volume**. Make sure that the neck is wide enough to allow the fruits to be easily removed. Avoid fingermarks.
- Made from one or more types of fruit.
- The fruit should be attractively packed with no gaps. Tightly packed but not squashed.
- The fruit should be of good quality, free from blemishes, tender and uniform in size, colour and ripeness.
- **Colour:** bright and characteristic of the fruit. There should be no darkening of the fruits nearer the top.
- **Syrup** should be clear and be free from sediment. The syrup should cover the fruit and the fruit should not rise up in the bottle.
- Bottles and jars will be judged unopened and should be vacuum-sealed. See www.allotment-garden.org/recipe/bottling-canning for advice on some suitable preserving methods.
- **Labels:** plain, neat, straight and in proportion with the bottle or jar. Place the label between any seams.
- Labelled with the recipe title, the **main ingredients** and the date of preservation. It is good practice to state the syrup concentration on the label.

Pickles

- **Jars:** standard clear glass, **up to 910g** (2lb, approx. 750ml). Ensure that the neck of the jar is wide enough for the pickles to be easily removed from the jar. Avoid fingermarks.

- Made from one or more types of vegetable. For example, onions, cabbage, gherkins or beetroot.
- **No mustard pickles;** save these for the Autumn Show.
- Apart from beetroot, vegetables should be crisp.
- The bright colour of the vegetables is best displayed in a clear white vinegar.
- The pickle should have a smooth, mature and well balanced flavour that is not too salty.
- Jars should be shown with approximately 12mm of vinegar over the pickle and 12mm of headspace.
- Jars should be sealed with a well fitting **vinegar-proof lid**. (No cellophane cover.) Cold vinegar preserves might not have a seal that pops when opened.
- **Labels:** plain, neat, straight and in proportion with the jar. Place the label between any seams.
- Labelled with the recipe title and preserving date.

Eggs

- 6 of one type of eggs in a box. For example, a matching set of chicken, duck, quail, bantam or goose eggs.
- Uniform in size, colour and shape.
- Shells free from stains and dirt. Good texture. No cracks.
- Fresh - should have a small air space when broken.
- Yolk: good colour, standing proud, free from blood and meat spots.
- White: firm, translucent and free from discolouration.