

## Beyond Bread and Cheese: Medieval Food for Potlucks By Gwendwyn the Silent

Rather than leave site for an event, many will offer a potluck meal. Potlucks give everyone an opportunity to share their favorite recipes and taste new dishes. Preparing an easy dish from home or picking up something from the market can make the event feel more authentic without a lot of work.

The food you bring should serve at least eight people. Remember to provide a ceramic, wooden or metal serving vessel and utensil. Include the label or list of ingredients, so that those with allergies can avoid items that will be a problem for them.

Ready-made food from the market:

- Bread: Whole grain, sourdough, French, focaccia are good choices.
- Spreads: Both sweet and savory, such as hummus, pate, fresh cheese, preserves, whole grain mustard and tapenade.
- Salad: Spinach, kale or mixed baby greens are a good choice, however tomatoes weren't eaten before the 17<sup>th</sup> century, tossed with vinegar and oil.
- Preserved vegetables: Brining, pickling and fermentation were some of the ways to extend fresh vegetables. Jardiniere, cabbage, carrots, artichokes, olives and cucumbers would be welcome hot or cold.
- Cheese: Whether it's made from cows, goats, sheep or bison, who doesn't love cheese? Types include Beaufort; Brie; Camembert; Cheddar; Comté; Emmenthal; Farmer's; Gorgonzola; Gouda; Gruyère; Mozzarella; Munster; Parmesan; Port-Salut; Romano; Roquefort (first recorded use is in 1070); Spermyse (soft or cream cheese flavored with herbs); and Stilton.
- Meat/Poultry/Fish: The deli is really helpful here with roast beef, ham, sausage, cold sliced or rotisserie chicken, smoked salmon, parboiled shrimp, and other pre-cooked items.
- Sweets: Fruit or custard pies, cheesecake, shortbread, candied nuts, fresh or dried fruit are tasty and easy.

Easy dishes to make at home or on site:

### Digby's Savory Toasted Cheese

½ cup butter

8 oz. Cream cheese

8 oz. Brie or other soft cheese

¼ tsp. white pepper

Melt the butter in a pot over a low heat. Stir in cream cheese and melt into butter. Add Brie or soft cheese, continue to stir as it melts until it has a smooth creamy texture. Serve warm over toasted bread, or as a dip for vegetables.

### Stuffed Eggs

8 hard-boiled eggs

1 raw whole eggs

½ cup shredded Parmesan

¼ Ricotta cheese

½ cup finely chopped Parsley

2 tbsp. finely chopped Marjoram

1 tsp. finely chopped Mint

½ tsp. salt

Pinch of saffron

¼ tsp. ground cloves

Butter or oil for frying

Peel cooked eggs, cut in half and reserve yolks. Mash yolks with cheese, herbs, spices and raw egg.

Spoon mixture into whites. Heat butter or oil in a skillet, add stuffed eggs cut side down and sauté until lightly browned; carefully turn and brown shell side. Serve with seasoned vinegar or sour orange sauce.

### Red Cabbage Salad

1 head of red cabbage, cored and shredded

¼ cup red wine vinegar

½ cup olive oil

Salt and pepper

Blanch cabbage for 5 minutes in boiling water, drain and toss with remaining ingredients.

### Scappi's Cucumber Salad

2 large cucumbers

Bunch of scallions, thinly sliced

handful of fresh basil leaves

1/4 cup olive oil

2 tbsp. white wine vinegar

1 tsp. salt

Peel the cucumbers, halving them lengthwise, and scoop out seeds, then sliced thinly. Finely slice basil and toss with remaining ingredients.

### Lentil and Barley Soup

1 tbsp. Olive oil

1 leek, white only chopped fine

1 cup lentils

½ barley

1 tsp. Dill weed

1 tsp. dried Savory

4 cups water or vegetable broth

1 tsp. salt

Heat oil, add leeks. When slightly translucent add remaining ingredients. Simmer until done. Add more water as needed to maintain consistency. Season to taste.

### Mushrooms

1 lb. crimini or button mushrooms

Olive oil

1 leek, minced white only

½ tsp. ground ginger

1 tsp. salt

Wipe, trim and quarter mushrooms. Heat oil in large skillet, add leeks and mushrooms, cook until slightly soft. Season with ginger and salt.

### Chicken and Bacon Pie

½ rotisserie chicken, shredded white and dark meat

4 oz. chopped bacon

1/8 tsp. pepper

½ tsp. cumin

Pinch of saffron

3 egg yolks

½ cup chicken broth

9 inch double crust pie shell

Beat egg yolks with spices and broth, and mix with chicken meat. Pour the mixture into pie shell and add bacon. Cover, crimp and seal top crust, brush with a little beaten egg. Bake 40 minutes at 350 degrees F.

### Limonia

1 whole chicken, cut in 8 pieces

2 tbsp. Oil or lard

1 medium onion, diced

1 tsp. salt

Pinch of saffron,

1 tsp. ground ginger

2 tbsp. rice flour or cornstarch

1 cup chicken broth

1 cup sour orange juice

Sprinkle salt on chicken. Heat the fat in a large skillet, add the chicken, brown on both sides. Add onion to skillet. Stir starch into cold broth, strain and add to the chicken and onions with saffron and ginger. Blend in the juice and reduce until slightly thickened. Serve on a platter with the sauce poured over.

### Cormarye

3-4 lb. boneless pork loin roast

1 tsp. caraway seed, ground

1 tsp. coriander seed, ground

2 cloves garlic

1 cup red wine

1 tsp. salt

½ cup chicken broth

¼ cup bread crumbs

Grind garlic to a paste with salt and mix with wine and spices. Marinate pork for at least an hour.

Preheat oven to 350F and roast for 20-25 minutes per pound of meat. Remove meat from liquid, add broth, stir and thicken with bread crumbs. Serve sliced meat with sauce.

### Meatballs

1 lb. ground beef

2 eggs

1 tbsp. sugar

1/8 tsp pepper

1/4 tsp each mace, cloves, cubebs, cinnamon

¼ tsp salt

Pinch of saffron

¼ cup currants

2 cups beef broth

¼ cup red wine

Mix meat with eggs, currants, sugar and spices, roll into 1 inch balls. Add wine to broth and bring to boil, reduce heat and add meatballs. Simmer in broth and wine until done.

### Doucetes

2 cups half & half (or whole milk)

5 large egg yolks

½ cup sugar

¼ tsp salt

Pinch of saffron

9 inch pastry shell, pre-baked

Crush saffron and bloom in a tablespoon of warm water. Whisk yolks with sugar, salt and saffron water.

Blend cream into mixture and pour into cooled pastry shell. Bake at 350F for 25-35 minutes, until set.

### Poached Pears

4 firm pears, peeled whole

1 cup red wine

1 cup water

2 tbsp. sugar

1 cinnamon stick

2 whole cloves

Add all ingredients but pears to a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Add pears and cover, simmer until slightly tender. Serve hot or cold.