

POINTERS for SHOW COOKING

ALWAYS READ SCHEDULE CAREFULLY

Show cooking is a lot of fun. If you win a prize it is a bonus. If you don't win a prize, study the winning entries to see where you went wrong, also talk to the chief steward. Good Luck.

- Toffee** Should be clear and the colour of straw when set hard. Should crack when hit with the handle of a knife.
- Marshmallow** Should break when twisted twice and be firm to the touch.
- French Jellies** Firm and good colour. Try and put two colours together as this is much more eye appealing.
- Chocolate fudge** Do not overheat as it grains too much and loses its bright colour.
- Russian caramels** Depends on the judge. Some like it like toffee. I like it grained like fudge.
- Chocolates** Moulded chocolates should have a good gloss. To achieve this, don't overheat chocolate and handle very little.
- Coconut Ice** Another sweet you mustn't overcook, as it becomes hard to cut. Most schedules say boiled, not made on capha. Also, don't colour pink too brightly. One drop of Rose Pink gives a good colour.
- Make all sweets a uniform size. In a collection, always name all varieties. Make sweets approximately 3 to 4 cm in size.**
- Scones** Light and fine in texture. This comes about by kneading well. Size should be about 5cm. For show work, scones should never touch while cooking. For pumpkin scones, always strain pumpkin so no pieces of pumpkin show in scones when opened. Before bringing scones to a show, rub any visible flour off with a soft cloth. Scones should be evenly cooked, and nicely browned top and bottom. Scones should be broken in half not cut. Texture. Scone should flake when thumb is rolled across lightly.
- Butter Cakes** Neat appearance, Firm icing, for show work ice on top only, unless otherwise stated. Good texture and flavour, light to touch. Without air bubbles, cooked evenly, nicely browned top and bottom, risen evenly without cracks, and moist mixture. Cocoa must be well mixed through mixture, no lumps of cocoa showing. Never put a skewer into show cooking as it will leave a mark in centre of cake when cut. If unsure if cake is cooked, lift from oven and put to ear. If it is still making a crackling noise, return to oven for a little longer. Another good guide as to when cake is ready is when it has left sides of tin. Let cakes sit for a while when taken from the oven, as it will avoid sticking and come out a lot easier.
- Slice** Should be cut into 5cm. squares. Six pieces to a tray unless stated otherwise. Base firm cooked according to recipe, nice even colour. Firm icing, not too wet, no drips over edges. For show work, trim edges to get a nice straight edge before cutting into 5cm. squares.
- Sponges** A good sponge is light and moist, but not soggy. Delicately and evenly browned, with no overhanging or sugar spots. With a sponge roll, take care not to overcook as they will crack when rolled. Always use warm jam in a Sandwich sponge or roll.

When icing cakes for show work, join sandwiches with a fine line of icing, always have only thin layer on top, using very little butter, add a little glycerine to keep icing soft. Carrot cakes ice with butter icing for show work, as filly cheese is too messy to handle, also will go mouldy after a couple of days in the heat also neaten round edge of icing.

When cooking for shows., forget you own a cake cooler, turn out on a tea towel, turn often, as cooler marks lose points. Always use good quality ingredients at room temperature. One tablespoon of hot water

added while creaming butter and sugar helps remove sugar spots. Use Fielders cornflour for cakes and White Wings for thickening. When adding flour, don't add all at once, as some flour is drier and you may not need it all. Only add until a good consistency. A good size for piklets is 1 tablespoon. Always pour mixture from point of spoon to get good shape. Don't put dates or prunes in rich fruit cake for show work. When icing cakes or patty cakes, use few decorations and keep away from where judge cuts through centre of cake. All entries are cut in half for judging and tasting, unless specified.

Biscuits. Bake in a low sided tray. High sided trays block out heat, causing the bottom of the biscuits to brown before the top. If mixture is too soft refrigerate rather than adding extra flour, which can spoil the mixture's texture.

Biscuits When schedule states "plate biscuits", they should be rolled or put through a pusher. Biscuits dropped and pressed with a fork are classed as cookies. Texture of biscuit should be fine and crisp. Flavour plays a big part in judging. The flavour should denote what type of biscuit it is. In a collection, name each variety and ensure uniformity.

Fruit Cake Flavour should be very pleasing, with fruit distributed evenly. When cut, fruit should have a glossy look. If overcooked, fruit will start to burst. The top should be nice and smooth. This can be achieved by wetting your hand and patting the top of the cake before cooking.

Sultana Cake Beat well to avoid sugar spots, but don't overbeat. For Show work, only use 360gm. Sultanas to a 250gm. Mixture.[check schedule] . The cake should be light brown when taken out of oven.

Boiled Fruit As this is called a "poor man's cake", it should have only 375gm. Packet of mixed Cake fruit and nice glossy top. A lot of competitors lose points by cleaning out the bowl too much. This part of the mixture has less fruit, and this will show, spoiling the appearance of the cake.

Shortbread To be a delicate straw colour. When tasted, should leave a rich butter taste in your mouth.

Kisses Characteristics are shortness and fine texture, due to the presence of cornflour. Kisses are mostly joined with jam and dusted with icing sugar, or as schedule.

FREEZING POINTS

All cakes are suitable for freezing. Make sure the cake has cooled thoroughly before freezing. Wrap tightly with cling wrap, so there is no air between the cake and wrapping. You can either put the cake in a container, or just wrap in paper and freeze. Simply ensure nothing heavy is placed on top of cake until frozen.


Chocolate icing goes a little streaky after freezing, for show work, ice after thawing. Thaw the day before the show wrapped in a towel to absorb any moisture.

Biscuits freeze well. Wrap show biscuits in cello-paper. Put each pack into a plastic dish and freeze. To thaw, take dish out of freezer but leave in airtight container until ready to use.

Scones can be frozen, but must be taken out on the morning of the show and wrapped in a tea towel.

For show work, never freeze sponge cakes, fruit cakes or shortbread. Fruit cakes and shortbread improve in flavour by keeping them out of the freezer. Sponge cakes should be made the day before the show.

TIN SIZES		
	Bar tin	21cm. X 11cm.
	Loaf tin	22cm. X 15cm.
	Lamington tin	28cm. X 18cm.
	Swiss roll tin	30cm. X 25cm.
	Sandwich	20cm round
	Fruit cakes	250gm. mixture – 20cm. round or square tin
		500gm. mixture – 25cm round or square tin.

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- Jams** Good colour and flavour, thick enough that when dropped from spoon will stay as dropped, should have nice pearly shine. Skin and fruit cut together.
- Jellies** Good colour when held up to light, free of any clouding. Best way to prevent this is to hang bag of fruit overnight, do not squeeze bag. Make sure bottle is full enough as when lid placed on bottle there is no gap between Jelly and lid. Also only stir jelly till sugar dissolves.
- Marmalade** Always cut skins finely, (without fruit) don't put through a blender. Some recipes give this method, but still not accepted for show work as it gives the jam a cloudy look. If jam is too hot when bottled fruit will rise from bottom losing points. When putting a collection of jams in show, unless schedule states "Jams and Marmalades", never use a citrus fruit jam as they are classed as marmalade.
- Cook rind till tender before adding sugar.
Jams lose colour with age.
Bottling jams same as for jellies.
- Bottles should be uniform size, approx 450g. Use bottles with straight sides neatly labelled, and polished free of drips and finger marks, always pack bottles of jelly or any bottle work, so as not to lean sideways during transport. Always line insides of lids with white cardboard or heavy paper, most judges prefer no hats.
- Relish** Should just be boiled to thicken; cornflour or plain flour should not be required. Good colour.
- Chutney** Good colour, fruity flavour, mellow taste.