

Baked Venison: Fresh and Preserved

Barony of Lions Gate Arts & Sciences Defenders

Lord Tomas de Courcy

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Overview

For this competition I am presenting two versions of baked venison, one which has been salted previous, and one which has not. Both will be served with Cameline sauce, as they would have been in the 1530s.

Recipes

Baked Fresh Venison

Source: Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery-Books (1450)

- 2-3 chops Fresh venison
 - 2-3 liters Water
 - 3 tsp Pepper
 - 1 tbsp Ginger
 - 2 tsp Salt
 - 4-5 strips Thick cut bacon
 - 1 Coffin
 - ¼ cup Flour
1. Take your venison and parboil it in fresh water, add salt if you wish
 2. Grind spices together and spread over venison on both sides
 3. Wrap venison in bacon, ensuring that the bacon does not overlap too much.
 4. Place in coffin, seal coffin with a mixture of water and flour
 5. Bake at 375 for about 30 min

Baked Salted Venison

Source: Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery-Books (1450)

- 2-3 chops Salted venison
 - 2 liters Water
 - ½ - 1 liter Red Wine Vinegar
 - 3 tsp Pepper
 - 1 tbsp Ginger
 - 4-5 strips Thick cut bacon
 - 1 Coffin
 - ¼ cup Flour
1. Take your venison and parboil it in 3 parts water 1 part wine vinegar
 2. Grind spices together and spread over venison on both sides
 3. Wrap venison in bacon, ensuring that the bacon does not overlap too much.
 4. Place in coffin, seal coffin with a mixture of water and flour
 5. Bake at 375 for about 30 min

Coffins

Source: Master Delbert von Straßburg adaptation

- 4 cups flour
 - 200g dripping
 - 1/3 cup water
 - 2 tbsp salt
 - 2 eggs
 - Some extra flour and water mixed together into a thick paste.
1. Sift the flour and salt into a mixing bowl.
 2. Add the water, and dripping to a saucepan and simmer, until the dripping has melted.
 3. Pour this mixture into the flour and salt, and stir until mixed.
 4. Add the eggs, stirring until the pastry forms a heavy dough.
 5. Roll out the pastry and cut a 20cm circle to fit in the bottom of a pie tin.
 6. Cut walls for the pie tin from the pastry and seal the walls to the base with the flour and water paste, making sure that all air gaps are well covered and sealed.
 7. Cut another circle to fit over the top of the coffin, but do not seal the coffin yet.
 8. Blind bake the coffin in the oven at 180C for 20 minutes or so, until the pastry hardens.
 9. Remove from the pie tin.

Winter Cameline Sauce

Source: Le Ménagier de Paris 1393

- Ginger 4 tsp
 - Cinnamon 5 tsp
 - Nutmeg 2 tsp
 - Saffron medium pinch
 - Red Wine 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ - 2 cup
 - Bread crumbs 2/3 cup
 - Water (enough to be absorbed by crumbs, not enough to drown them)
 - Red sugar (brown sugar) 4-12 tsp
1. Grind ginger, cinnamon, saffron & nutmeg: soak in wine.
 2. Moisten bread crumbs in cold water, grind them up into a paste
 3. Add paste to the sauce, mix thoroughly, allow to sit
 4. Strain once
 5. Boil till smooth and desired thickness
 6. Add sugar to taste
 7. Strain again if necessary

Persona

Lord Tomas de Courcy

Born November 30, 1505, Saint Andrew the Apostle's day

The de Courcy Estate is in south-eastern Norfolk between Norwich and Yarmouth, a short ride from the River Yare.

Tomas' Grandfather, Robert de Courcy, towards the end of his days saw the demand for serfs rise as the population fell due to plague. In an attempt to keep his serfs, and perhaps increase the number of workers, he began signing copyhold agreements with his serfs. This gave the serfs a section of land and the right to run their sheep on the de Courcy land in exchange for a day of service every week and the first portion of their wool, or the equivalent in money. It also allowed the serfs to pass the land they rented down to their family for the next three generations. This allowed the de Courcy family to thrive in a time where other lords were losing their serfs rapidly and having to sell land in an attempt to continue in the same lifestyle as before. The de Courcys allowed their serfs to sell their wool with them through the same merchants, thus allowing them all to receive the same prices as the de Courcys. This allowed the de Courcys to expand their holdings and by signing exclusive agreements with a single family of merchants led to their becoming wealthy.

Tomas has three older brothers, and both his parents still live. His father manages the estate, and his mother manages the household. His brothers all took different paths. The eldest is inheriting the manor and works with their father, learning how to run the land. The second is a lawyer in London, having studied at Oxford. And the third married into a wealthy merchant's family (the same family with which Tomas' Grandfather made the agreement) and is learning the tricks of the wool trade.

Tomas' early life was taken up mostly with lessons and learning about the local trades: sheep and wool. He discovered a passion for his lessons young, and could often be found with his nose in a book of some form or another. Having little interest in trade, and no interest in sheep he decided to follow his brother in education.

Beginning his education at Oxford he was accepted into Corpus Christi College, there thankfully having been only one candidate from the County of Lincon that year. Tomas decided that he would make his living by the scholarly arts. After having his degree conferred in 1532, Tomas was hired on by Charles Blount, Baron Mountjoy as a tutor for his children. He now resides in Apethorpe Northamptonshire, and frequently travels to London with Charles as a secretary.

Venison and Persona

During the Middle Ages, and into the Renaissance, venison was a major food source for great lords. Fresh venison was often served on special occasions, and salted venison was frequently used as well. On a list of menus in *Le Menagier de Paris* Jerome Pichon lists venison in nearly every menu at least once. Venison seems to have been primarily salted as a method of preservation as it "lends itself well to this method of preserving" (Woolgar, Serjeantson and Waldron), and some cuts, especially the breast "were at their best when salted".

It was, however, a food for those with large reserves and lands as the amount of land required to have several sizeable herds of deer was vast, so for most poor knights it was an occasional food. For some great lords, though, it was abundant and available at any time. This, combined with the price of salt, made it a luxury for the lesser nobility, and a sign of status for those who could afford to eat it (Woolgar, Serjeantson and Waldron).

One example of the amount of venison that great lords would have on hand in their larders comes from Lancaster, where in 1313 there were 51 carcasses, and the following year there were 73 (Woolgar, Serjeantson and Waldron). It is likely that the Blount's would have had access to venison all year round, either fresh or salted.

Baked venison is a dish that would not have been at all out of place on the Blount's table. The dishes I made are examples of what could have been on the table to serve for guests, or for special occasions.

Preservation of Venison

Salting

The salting of meat was a common practice in the middle ages. This allowed for the preservation, storage, and transport of meat without refrigeration. According to *Food in Medieval England* "it was a routine procedure on big estates for deer to be hunted according to season, when the meat was at its best, and the venison prepared and stored in larders till needed, and in this case heavier salting would be necessary" (Woolgar, Serjeantson and Waldron). The salting of venison, as I talked about earlier, was common in great households, so much so that there were quite often men whose sole job was the preservation of food. They would accompany the huntsmen so as to make sure that the deer were treated properly and would be preserved properly (Woolgar, Serjeantson and Waldron). Salted venison was stored in casks, or more specifically doliis (Woolgar, Serjeantson and Waldron) which is the same word used for wine casks. From this I assume then that they mean waterproof casks such as would be used for wine.

I found several different ways of salting meats: lightly coating in salt, temporary packing in salt, partial packing in salt and long term packing in salt.

The short term salting process seems to have been lightly coating the meat in salt, just enough to cover it, and then hanging it by a fireplace to fully dry, then it may be consumed (Pichon). According to Nkixwstn James this is a form of drying using the salt to draw the moisture out quicker. This leads to a similar end product as dried meat (James).

Temporary packing in salt seems to function as the main method of salting for most meats. In this method the meat is packed in salt in a water tight cask for a period of time running from one day to a month, then removing from the salt and hanging it by a fireplace, or other warm location, to dry. After that, it may be hung in a dry place for one to four years depending on the type of meat (Pichon).

Partial packing in salt was a method that I only ran across in *Le Menagier de Paris*, translated by Janet Hinson: "it is appropriate to salt it in a wash-tub or bath ground coarse salt, and after dry it in the sun" (Pichon). This seems to imply that covering is not necessary if the meat is immersed in salt. That line of thought is continued by Daniel Myers in his experiments in salting which I used as the first basis of our salting process. You may examine his results at <http://www.medievalcooking.com/recipes/saltvenison.html> (Myers, Salted Venison).

The long term method appears to be packing the meat in salt, ensuring that the meat is fully covered, and in a water tight container, "Salt hit wyth drye salt, alle in fere. And do hit in a barel penne. Þe barel staf ful as I þe kenne, Stop wele þo hede for wynde and sone, For hit wylle payre þo venyson" (Asher). The meat would then be removed shortly before using, perhaps up to a week previous. This may be a method mostly used for travel, as casks would be easier to bring in a supply train, than the individual pieces, and would likely keep longer as they would have no exposure to moist air, which all forms of salting seem to agree is bad for it. However, as I live in a very moist climate I decided that this the most Food Safe method.

When salting it seems that two different kinds of salt were used: gross salt and white salt. Gross salt seems to have been what we today call sea salt, and appears to have been the cheaper variety (Woolgar, Serjeantson and Waldron). White salt appears to have been refined salt which cost more, but was of higher quality, and was a better salt for preserving meat. You can find a basic method for creating white salt in *Le Menagier de Paris* (Pichon). It seems to have taken a large amount of salt to preserve a deer, with some records putting the amount at between ½ a bushel and two bushels depending on the size of the deer (Woolgar, Serjeantson and Waldron). Because of this the better white salt was normally mixed with the coarser gross salt in an attempt to keep costs down. Today the costs are reversed. Sea Salt is expensive, while pickling salt (the modern day version of their “white salt”) is cheaper. At Sealion War 2009 myself and my wife used a mixture of the two salts. For this project I have decided to use only the better quality salt (medievally speaking) and go with pure pickling salt.

The venison I used for this project was venison chops from the deer a friend of mine shot this past October. It had been frozen prior to salting. Traditionally of course fresh venison would have been preserved, but I was unable to acquire it in a timely fashion as I didn't get a deer this year. I allowed the meat to thaw in the fridge, and used a sink full of water to finish making sure that they were fully defrosted. I patted the meat down with paper towel to remove the moisture, as the meat would have been hung for a day or two, which would have removed most of the incidental moisture.

I prepared our version of the cask. I used the same glass baking dish that I used in our previous experiment with venison, it has an air tight lid for this. I originally decided on this as it was cheaper than buying a water tight cask, and this way I could see how the salt was doing throughout the salting process (Myers' attempts turned a reddish colour, which I think was a combination of not patting the meat dry enough and the open top, but I wanted to be able to see any change in colour without opening it).

The venison was salted on January 8th 2010. I removed the venison from the salt to be immediately prepared.

Preparation for cooking

Before cooking salted venison most cookbooks of the time seem to have recommended parboiling it in a mixture of wine and water (Pichon) or water and vinegar (Redon, Sabban and Serventi), likely wine vinegar, in an attempt to “draw out the salt” (Pichon). The last time I did a similar recipe I used a mixture of water and wine vinegar, which worked very well, and drew out most of the salt. The second recipe I did was with salted salmon, which I did not parboil, although the crust drew some of the salt out, it did not draw enough. My hope is that the crust will draw out any salt that remains in the venison. I parboiled the venison in three parts water one part wine vinegar, which is the mixture that worked well before.

Baked Venison

Research

Venison

When looking for a baked venison, or venison pie, recipe I found seven different recipes, sometimes from the same cookbook, spanning from 1393 till 1596. I have arranged them in order with my commentary here.

DEER VENISON. As this meat is tougher than fawn or goat, it must be parboiled and larded all along it: and in cooking, it must be put in plenty of wine, and when partly

cooked, ground mace added; and it must be eaten with cameline. - Item, in pastry, let it be parboiled, larded along its length, and eaten cold with cameline. (Pichon)

Fresh VENISON PASTY. You must parboil the venison, and skim it, then lard it and make pastry: this is the way to make pasties of all fresh venison; and it should be cut in big, long pieces like rolling-pins, and this is called 'pasty of larded boiled meat.' (Pichon)

Le Menagier de Paris, published in 1393 has two versions of baked venison. In both cases the meat is parboiled, then larded. The only spice recommended is mace.

Venyson y-bake.—Take hoghes of Venyson, & parboyle hem in fayre Water an Salt; & whan þe Fleyssche is fayre y-boylid, make fayre past, & cast þin Venyson þer-on; & caste a-boue an be-neþe, poudere Pepir, Gyngere, & Salt, & þan sette it on þe ouyn, & lat bake, & serue forth. (Austin)

“Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery-Books” published in 1888 is a compilation of two manuscripts, one from 1430 and one from 1450. In this case the venison is parboiled in salted water, then laid in the pastry and a spice mixture of pepper, ginger and salt are spread on and under it. It is then baked and served hot.

To bake Veneson.

Take nothyng but pepper and salte, but lette it haue ynoughe, and yf the Veneson be leane, larde it throughe wyth bacon. (Frere)

“A Proper newe Booke of Cokerye” was published in 1557, and is the most succinct recipe. In this case the venison is not parboiled, but is just salted and peppered and then larded. Of note is that unlike the other recipes which assume you know what the term larding means this recipe reminds us that it needs to be done with bacon.

To bake Venison to eat hot. Cut the Venison in faire peeces, in quantitie as you will have your pasties, and perboyle it, that doon stick the grain side ful of Cloves, and Lard the lean side with good lard, and season it with pepper, salt, and all manner of spices; then put the grained side of the venison downwards into the coffin of brown paste, and so close it and bake it, and when it is open turn the grain side upward.

To bake Venison to eat colde. Take Venison and cut it as the graine goeth, and cut it in quantity as ye wil have your Pasties, and perboile it in faire water, then take Lard and cut it in length of your flesh, and therwith lard it as thicke as you can, so that one peece of the Larde touch not an other. Then take all manner of spices, salt, and Vinagre, that doon, put it into brown paste and bake it. (A.W.)

“A Book of Cookrye”, published in 1591, gives us two different recipes for baked venison. In both cases the venison is parboiled, and larded, but if it is to be served hot then one side of the venison is stuck with cloves (the side that will face down in the pastry). In both cases it is done in a brown paste coffin.

To bake a Red deare.

Take a handfull of Time, and a handfull of rosemarye, a handfull of winter sauerye, a handful of Bay leaues, and a handful of fennel, and when your liquor seethe that you perboyle your Venison in, put in your hearbes also, and perboyle your venison vntill it be halfe enough, then take it out and lay it vpon a faire boorde that the water may runne out from it, then take a knife and pricke it full of holes, and while it is warme, haue a faire Traye with vineger therein, and so put your Venison therein from morning vntill night, and euer now, and then turne it vpside downe, and then at night haue your coffin ready, and this done season it with synamon, ginger, and Nutmegges, Pepper and salte, and when you haue seasoned it, put it into your coffin, and put a good quantity of sweete Butter into it, and then put it into the Ouen at hight, when you goe to bedde, and in the morning draw it forth, and put in a saucer full of vineger into your Pye, at a hole aboue in the toppe of it, so that the vineger may runne into everyplace of it, and then stop the hole again, and turne the bottom upward, and so serve it in. (Dawson)

“The Good Housewife’s Jewell”, published in 1596 gives the most complex version of baked venison. The venison is parboiled in herbed water, but not to full cooking (something that may have been assumed in the other recipes), and then soaked in vinegar. It is then put in the coffin with various spices and butter and then baked, then vinegar is added to the meat prior to serving. The adding of vinegar to the venison at the end seems to have only come up in the later recipes (1590s).

Pastry

I have five different medieval pastry recipes. It is very rare for a cookbook to specify which type of pastry is required for a given recipe, instead it is assumed that the chef already knows what type of pastry goes best with what type of pie. I will give my comments following each of the five variations.

Pastry

- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 4 Tbsp. Butter
- 2 egg yolks
- 1/2 tsp. Salt
- pinch saffron
- water, about 3/8 cup

1. Mix flour, salt, and saffron together in a large bowl.
2. Cut or rub the butter and eggs into the flour mixture until it forms fine crumbs.
3. Add water a little at a time until it just sticks together - too much water will make the dough too soft and sticky.
4. Cover with a towel and allow to rest for 30 minutes.

(Myers, Salmon Pie)

This recipe is the one created as a general medieval style pastry by Daniel Myers (Master Edouard Halidai). It is a good and useful pastry which seems to work well for a variety of uses.

Coffins

- 4 cups flour
- 200g dripping

- 1/3 cup water
 - 2 tblspns salt
 - 2 eggs
 - Some extra flour and water mixed together into a thick paste.
1. Sift the flour and salt into a mixing bowl.
 2. Add the water and dripping to a saucepan and simmer, until the dripping has melted.
 3. Pour this mixture into the flour and salt, and stir until mixed.
 4. Add the eggs, stirring until the pastry forms a heavy dough.
 5. Roll out the pastry and cut a 20cm circle to fit in the bottom of a pie tin.
 6. Cut walls for the pie tin from the pastry and seal the walls to the base with the flour and water paste, making sure that all air gaps are well covered and sealed.
 7. Cut another circle to fit over the top of the coffin, but do not seal the coffin yet.
 8. Blind bake the coffin in the oven at 180C for 20 minutes or so, until the pastry hardens.
 9. Remove from the pie tin.

(Straßburg)

Although today we feel uncomfortable about baking things into crusts and not refrigerating them it seems to have been a very common practice in Medieval Europe. Master Delbert von Straßburg (SCA) has written a fabulous article on pies as preserving methods, including an analysis by the Sydney Pathology Laboratory. If you would like to read her article, it is in Issue 21 of the Cockatrice, which is found online at http://www.sca.org.au/cockatrice/uploads/issue21_pyes.pdf. At the end of the four week testing process it was discovered that:

All 12 pies submitted for testing remained fresh, with no microorganisms isolated within the pie filling, after 4 weeks at room temperature. (Straßburg)

This recipe is the one which Straßburg used for the experiment.

Shortcrust Pastry

- 200g flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 100g margarine or butter
- pinch saffron
- 1 egg yolk
- iced water

If you're using saffron, steep in a tablespoon of hot water for at least half an hour, so the water has time to cool.

1. Sift flour and salt into a basin.
2. Cut chilled fat into the flour, chopping into small pieces.
3. With your fingers, rub the fat into the flour, shaking the bowl at intervals to bring lumps to the top.
4. When you've finished, the mixture should look slightly mealy, like breadcrumbs.

5. Drop egg yolk into a well in the flour mixture, and add a few tablespoons of iced water, and the saffron water if you're using it.
6. Mix with a butter knife.
7. The mix should start to form lumps; if it doesn't, add iced water a little at a time until it does.
8. Form pastry into a ball and wrap in Clingfilm; refrigerate for about half an hour before using.
9. Roll it out on a floured board, use a chilled marble rolling pin if at all possible.

This recipe should make one small covered pie, or a largish tart.

(Medieval Pastry)

This version is best for use in a sweet pie or tart, and is what my wife and I used for the Prune Pie at Lionsdale Champions 2009.

Hot Water Pastry

- 1 lb(2 cups) Flour
- 1 tsp. Salt
- 1/2 lb. Lard, or the preferred Butter (or 1/4 each)
- 1/4 pint (1/2 cup) Boiling water, or milk and water.

1. Rub a tablespoon of the butter (lard) into the flour and salt with your fingertips.
2. Take the remaining butter (lard), and add it to the liquid.
3. Heat the liquid over med. heat until it just breaks a boil, and the butter (lard) is melted.
4. Make a well in the flour, dump in the liquid and melted fat, and stir quickly with a wooden spoon to combine.
5. Cover with a cloth to keep it warm, and let the dough rest for 10 minutes or so in a warm place.
6. Roll out dough

(Finn)

The hot water crust does not seem to have changed since the medieval period with the exception of the now mandatory inclusion of milk which seems to make the pastry lighter and tastier. This is what my wife and I used last year as our version of the coffin at Sealion War 2009. The food within this should be protected from spoiling for up to 4 weeks. The crust does not taste very good, and may not have been intended to be eaten, but rather was more of a cooking and serving vehicle.

Simple Pastry

- 1 cup flour
 - 1/8 cup water
 - 1/2 tsp. salt
 - 1 pinch saffron
1. Grind saffron, place in water, and allow color to diffuse (saffron is optional)
 2. Mix the salt and flour together

3. Add water a little at a time, mixing with a fork, until it forms a pliable dough
 4. Use additional water as needed.
 5. Roll out dough
- (Myers, Chicken Pasty)

A basic pastry recipe, with the addition of saffron to change the colour, this was also adapted by Daniel Myers.

I will be using Straßburg's coffin recipe for this project because it is a style I haven't made before, though it is very similar to the Hot Water Pastry used at Sealion, the main changes are that this is a prebaked coffin and it contains eggs.

Larding

The process of larding is quite simple. Slits are cut into the meat and small strips of bacon are slipped through and then knotted. This would keep the meat moist throughout cooking. This seems to have been used for both small and large amounts of meat, even to the point of larding entire deer. (larding) For a smaller amount of meat the bacon would just have been wrapped around the meat, which is what I will be doing. This is still a common method today, and is used to ensure that turkeys do not get too dry while roasting. For this I will be using thick cut bacon which has more fat on it and is closer to what they would have had than most North American bacon.

Practical

I decided to prepare my venison in the style that seems to have been the most common: parboiling it, then adding spices and larding it, and finally putting it in a coffin and baking it. This seems to be the common thread throughout all seven recipes. I will give two versions of my adaptation, one for fresh venison and one for salted.

Baked Fresh Venison

- 2-3 chops Fresh venison
 - 2-3 liters Water
 - 3 tsp Pepper
 - 1 tbsp Ginger
 - 2 tsp Salt
 - 4-5 strips Thick cut bacon
 - 1 Coffin
 - ¼ cup Flour
6. Take your venison and parboil it in fresh water, add salt if you wish
 7. Grind spices together and spread over venison on both sides
 8. Wrap venison in bacon, ensuring that the bacon does not overlap too much.
 9. Place in coffin, seal coffin with a mixture of water and flour
 10. Bake at 350 for about 40 min

Baked Salted Venison

- 2-3 chops Salted venison
 - 2-3 liters Water
 - ½ liter Red Wine Vinegar
 - 3 tsp Pepper
 - 1 tbsp Ginger
 - 4-5 strips Thick cut bacon
 - 1 Coffin
 - ¼ cup Flour
6. Take your venison and parboil it in 3 parts water 1 part wine vinegar
 7. Grind spices together and spread over venison on both sides
 8. Wrap venison in bacon, ensuring that the bacon does not overlap too much.
 9. Place in coffin, seal coffin with a mixture of water and flour
 10. Bake at 350 for about 40 min

Adaptations

Ingredients

The venison I used was frozen previously, and had some freezer burn discoloration to it. Fresh venison would have been salted within a day of the hunt, and the unsalted remainder would have been eaten soon after. In order to get a good comparison I am using chops from the same deer for both versions, which necessitated the freezing of the meat.

The salt I used for salting the meat would have been used sparingly, and would have been stretched by using cheaper salt in addition. Because of the reasons I outlined in the preservation section I am using only “white salt”, which we refer to now as pickling salt.

The wine vinegar we have today is likely more powerful than that which would have been used in the early 16th century. Because of this I used one part wine vinegar to three parts water rather than the half and half method that seems to have been used in period (Redon, Sabban and Serventi).

I was going to add saffron to the coffin mostly because it seems to be a common addition for the purpose of colouring, and perhaps moderating the flavour of the crust. However, I then found this line in “Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery-Books” :

And then close thi coffyn with a lydde of the same paast, And putte hit in the oven, And late hit bake ynogh; but be ware, or thou close hit, that there come no saffron nygh the brinkes there-of, for then hit will never close. (Austin)

I decided that using saffron in this coffin could be a major mistake, but I would like to try it sometime in the future.

The fat I used for the coffin is pig fat I got from my local butcher. This seems to have been a common source of the fat drippings for pastries.

Cooking Methods

Rather than sticking to one particular recipe and following it exactly I went with the common theme of all of the recipes. I feel that by doing this I made a more standardized version of the dish, and one which would have been easily recognized from the 14th to the 16th centuries. It is, however, the most closely based on the recipe from “Two Fifteenth-Century Cookery-Books”.

The form I used to make the coffins was a large stoneware pie dish. Although I list this under adaptations, it is highly likely that similar forms were used by the 16th century.

Although I have two potential recipes for coffins—one by Delbert von Strassburg and one by Aoife Finn they were both created based on assumptions rather than by finding a period recipe for a coffin. I have managed to find a few period pastry recipes, but they were all sweet pastries designed for desserts. I hope to someday find a period recipe for coffins, but until then I will have to make do with adaptations. I assume that the lack of coffin recipes is due to the assumption that any cook would know how to make a basic pastry or coffin, and so a pastry recipe would only be included if there was a major adaptation needed, for example, the addition of sugar, figs, or spices. It may be that because a coffin is not truly meant to be eaten the composition of the coffin makes no difference to most recipes. Whenever I have found a recipe for a pastry it seems to have ingredients added to it which seem to make it more edible.

As mentioned previously I am using a glass airtight container instead of a wooden airtight container for salting the venison. This is for both foodsafe and simplicity reasons. I use a glass Pyrex casserole dish with an air tight lid.

Cameline Sauce

I chose Cameline sauce because it seems to have been recommended as the preferred condiment for venison in nearly every source, especially baked venison.

Methodology

I prepared four versions of cameline sauce and had them taste tested by a group of friends. They voted on which of the sauces they thought was the best. I took the one they voted was the best and adapted the recipe more to improve it for the Lions Gate Defenders competition.

Recipes

15th Century Cameline Sauce

This recipe is from “Two Fifteenth Century Cookery-books: About 1430-1450” by Thomas Austin. I first found this recipe as the basis of Daniel Myers’ Cameline sauce (Myers, Medieval Cookery). Instead of following his version of this (which was more of an amalgamation of several different Cameline recipes) I followed the given recipe.

Source

Sauce gamelyne. Take faire brede, and kutte it, and take vinegre and wyne, & stepe þe brede therein, and drawe hit thorgh a streynour with powder of canel, and drawe hit twies or thries til hit be smoth; and þen take pouder of ginger, Sugur, and pouder of cloues, and cast þerto a litul saffron and let hit be thik ynogh, and thenne serue hit forthe. (Austin)

My Adaptation

Cameline Sauce

- White bread 1 slice
- Vinegar (red wine vinegar?) 1½ Tbsp
- Red Wine 2Tbsp
- Canel (cinnamon) 1tsp
- Ginger 1tsp
- Sugar 1-3tsp (to taste)

- Cloves ½ tsp
 - Saffron small pinch
1. Cut the white bread up
 2. Soak in a combination of wine and vinegar
 3. Add cinnamon
 4. Strain it till smooth
 5. Add ginger, sugar, cloves, and saffron
 6. Heat if desired
 7. Mix
 8. serve

Results

The result was a simple and easy sauce made with ingredients that are easy to find in our modern time. The result was a sauce that was essentially a cinnamon sauce with very little depth of flavour. The cinnamon drowned out most of the other flavours, resulting in a very flat sauce. This would be ok for some meals, but lacks the flavour notes that I was looking for. It was ranked third in the decision of the tasters.

Two Cameline Sauces from Le Ménagier de Paris

From Le Ménagier de Paris we get two different styles of Cameline sauce. These 1393 recipes seem to make use of a wider variety of flavours than the later versions. I made both of them to test against each other.

Source

CAMELINE. Note that at Tournais, to make cameline, they grind together ginger, cinnamon and saffron and half a nutmeg: soak in wine, then take out of the mortar; then have white bread crumbs, not toasted, moistened with cold water and grind in the mortar, soak in wine and strain, then boil it all, and lastly add red sugar: and this is winter cameline. And in summer they make it the same way, but it is not boiled.

And in truth, for my taste, the winter sort is good, but the following is much better: grind a little ginger with lots of cinnamon, then take it out, and have lots of toasted bread or bread-crumbs in vinegar, ground and strained. (Pichon)

My Adaptations

1)

Winter Cameline Sauce

- Ginger 1tsp
- Cinnamon 1tsp
- Saffron small pinch
- Nutmeg 1tsp
- Red Wine 2Tbsp
- Bread crumbs 3Tbsp
- Water (enough to be absorbed by crumbs, not enough to drown them)
- Red sugar (brown sugar) 1-3tsp

1. Grind ginger cinnamon, saffron, nutmeg: soak in wine.

2. Moisten bread crumbs in cold water, grind them up into a paste
3. Add paste to the sauce
4. Strain once
5. Boil till smooth
6. Add sugar to taste
7. Strain again if necessary.

Results

This sauce was easy to make, and had a rich and complex flavour. It was overly thick, and I think that it should be done with five tablespoons of wine instead of two. The brown sugar lent a nice sweetness to the dish, while the nutmeg, cinnamon, and ginger gave it a slightly bitter taste. The sauce I made was also too concentrated, and a better option would be to boil the sauce down if it has too much liquid rather than risking it having too little. The cooking seems to allow the flavours to blend properly. This sauce tied for the best of the sauces.

2)

Parisian Cameline Sauce

- Ginger 1 tsp
 - Cinnamon 1Tbsp
 - Toasted bread 3Tbsp
 - Red Wine Vinegar enough to be absorbed by crumbs, and a little more
1. Cut bread into squares
 2. Grind ginger cinnamon
 3. Add bread and spices to vinegar
 4. Let soak
 5. mix/grind
 6. Strain

Results

Although this sauce was the fastest to make it was the least liked. It was bitter and too harsh, lacking the subtlety of the other sauces. The addition of brown sugar may have improved it, but because this version of the sauce was disliked by all tasters I won't be trying it again.

David Friedman and Elizabeth Cook's version of Le Ménagier de Paris Cameline Sauce

Source

Note that at Tournay to make cameline they bray ginger, cinnamon and saffron and half a nutmeg moistened with wine, then take it out of the mortar; then have white bread crumbs, not toasted but moistened in cold water and brayed in the mortar, moisten them with wine and strain them, then boil all together and put in brown sugar last of all; and that is winter cameline. And in summer they do the same but it is not boiled.

	Sweet	spicy	Sweet & spicy
ginger	1 t	1 t	1 t
cinnamon	1 t	1 t	1 t
saffron	medium pinch for all 3		

nutmeg	1 whole	1/2 whl	1/2 whle
wine	2 T	1/2 c	1/2 c
bread crumbs	3 T	2 T	2 T
brown sugar	2 T	1 t	1 T
cold water	2 c	1 c	1 c

Grind smoothly until well ground, add bread crumbs, grind smooth, add water and wine, bring it to a boil, simmer until thickened and add the brown sugar. (Friedman and Cook)

Results

This is the only sauce which I did not adapt as it had already been adapted by Friedman and Cook. I made the sweet version of this sauce. Though it tied as being liked the most, this was the hardest sauce to make. The resulting sauce was very thin and required being simmered and stirred for almost two hours. I also feel that the adaptation is not close enough to the original source. Though this creates a good tasting sauce, I think that the ratio of liquid to dry ingredients is wrong, and includes vastly more water than the original recipe calls for.

Final Version

Winter Cameline Sauce from Le Ménagier de Paris 1393

- Ginger 4 tsp
 - Cinnamon 5 tsp
 - Saffron medium pinch
 - Nutmeg 2 tsp
 - Red Wine 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ - 2 cup
 - Bread crumbs 2/3 cup
 - Water (enough to be absorbed by crumbs, not enough to drown them)
 - Red sugar (brown sugar) 4-12 tsp
1. Grind ginger cinnamon, saffron, nutmeg: soak in wine.
 2. Moisten bread crumbs in cold water, grind them up into a paste
 3. Add paste to the sauce, mix thoroughly, let sit
 4. Strain once
 5. Boil till smooth and desired thickness
 6. Add sugar to taste
 7. Strain again if necessary

Final Notes

This project was a very interesting one, in that I got to take one of my previous projects and adapt and build on what I had done already. I felt before that I hadn't done enough with preserved venison, and so I wanted to try out a recipe where I could compare salted and fresh venison in nearly identical recipes. This also allowed me to build on what I learned from salting venison the first time, namely the best ways to bring out the salt, and allowed me to experiment with a second type of hot water pastry, or coffin. In addition I got to try out larding, which should be a simple step, as anything made with bacon is inherently better, according to the first law of bacon.

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